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**CAPT. FRANKLIN'S**  
**JOURNEYS TO THE POLAR SEA.**

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WILLIAM LLOYD

JOHN LLOYD

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*Margaret Wilson*  
**JOURNEY** *Canary*

TO THE

**SHORES OF THE POLAR SEA,**

In 1819-20-21-22 :

WITH

**A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE SECOND JOURNEY**

In 1825-26-27.

BY

**JOHN FRANKLIN, CAPT. R.N. F.R.S.**

**AND COMMANDER OF THE EXPEDITION.**

**FOUR VOLS.,—WITH PLATES.**

**VOL. II.**

**LONDON:**

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**JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.**

**MDCCCXXIX.**

**1829**


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The image shows a page from a manuscript, likely a historical or religious text, written in a stylized, dotted font. The text is arranged in three horizontal rows. The first row at the top contains a series of characters that appear to be a mix of letters and symbols, possibly representing a specific dialect or a form of shorthand. The second row in the middle is more densely packed with characters, suggesting a full line of text. The third row at the bottom also contains a series of characters, similar in style to the others. The dots used to form the letters are small and dark, and the overall appearance is that of a printed or typed document rather than a handwritten one.

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the object of our expedition had been explained to them, expressed themselves much interested in our progress ; but they could not give a particle of information respecting the countries beyond the Athabasca Lake. We smoked with them, and gave each person a glass of mixed spirits and some tobacco. A Canadian servant of the North-West Company, who was residing with them, informed us that this family had lost numerous relatives, and that the destruction of property, which had been made after their deaths, was the only cause for the pitiable condition in which we saw them, as the whole family were industrious hunters, and, therefore, were usually better provided with clothes, and other useful articles, than most of the Indians. We purchased from them a pair of snow-shoes, in exchange for some ammunition. The Chipewyans are celebrated for making them good and easy to walk in ; we saw some here upwards of six feet long, and three broad. With these unwieldy clogs an active hunter, in the spring, when there is a crust on the surface

of the snow, will run down a moose or red deer.

We made very slow progress after leaving this party, on account of the deep snow, but continued along the river until we reached its junction with the Athabasca or Elk River. We obtained observations on an island, a little below the Forks, which gave, longitude  $111^{\circ} 8' 42''$  W., variation  $24^{\circ} 18' 20''$  E. Very little wood was seen during this day's march. The western shore, near the Forks, is destitute of trees; it is composed of lofty perpendicular cliffs, which were now covered with snow. The eastern shore supports a few pines.

*March 18.*—Soon after our departure from the encampment, we met two men from the establishment at Pierre au Calumet, who gave us correct information of its situation and distance. Having the benefit of their track, we marched at a tolerably quick pace, and made twenty-two miles in the course of the day, though the weather was very disagreeable for travelling, being stormy, with constant snow. We kept

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along the river the whole time; its breadth is about two miles. The islands appear better furnished with wood than its banks, the summits of which are almost bare. Soon after we had encamped our Indian guide rejoined us; he had remained behind the day before, without consulting us, to accompany a friend on a hunting excursion. On his return he made no endeavour to explain the reason of his absence, but sat down coolly, and began to prepare his supper. This behaviour made us sensible that little dependance is to be placed on the continuance of an Indian guide, when his inclination leads him away.

Early the next morning we sent forward the Indian and a Canadian, to apprise the gentlemen in charge of Pierre au Calumet of our approach, and, after breakfast, the rest of the party proceeded along the river for that station, which we reached in the afternoon. The senior partner of the North-West Company in the Athabasca department, Mr. John Stuart, was in charge of the post. Though he was quite ignorant until this

morning of our being in the country, we found him prepared to receive us with great kindness, and ready to afford every information and assistance, agreeably to the desire conveyed in Mr. Simon M'Gillivray's circular letter. This gentleman had twice traversed this continent, and reached the Pacific by the Columbia River; he was, therefore, fully conversant with the different modes of travelling, and with the obstacles that may be expected in passing through unfrequented countries. His suggestions and advice were consequently very valuable to us, but not having been to the northward of the Great Slave Lake, he had no knowledge of that line of country, except what he had gained from the reports of the Indians. He was of opinion, however, that positive information, on which our course of proceedings might safely be determined, could be procured from the Indians that frequent the north side of the lake, when they came to the forts in the spring. He recommended my writing to the partner in charge of that department, requesting him

to collect all the intelligence he could, and to provide guides and hunters from the tribe best acquainted with the country through which we proposed to travel.

To our great regret, Mr. Stuart expressed much doubt as to our prevailing upon any experienced Canadian voyagers to accompany us to the sea, in consequence of their dread of the Esquimaux; who, he informed us, had already destroyed the crew of one canoe, which had been sent under Mr. Livingstone to open a trading communication with those who reside near the mouth of the Mackenzie River; and he also mentioned, that the same tribe had driven away the canoes under Mr. Clark's direction, going to them on a similar object, to which circumstance I have alluded in my remarks at Isle à la Crosse.

This was unpleasant information; but we were comforted by Mr. Stuart's assurance that himself and his partners would use every endeavour to remove their fears, as well as to promote our views in every other way; and he undertook, as a neces-

sary part of our equipment in the spring, to prepare the bark and other materials for constructing two canoes at this post.

Mr. Stuart informed us that the residents at Fort Chipewyan, from the recent sickness of their Indian hunters, had been reduced to subsist entirely on the produce of their fishing-nets, which did not then yield more than a bare sufficiency for their support; and he kindly proposed to us to remain with him until the spring: but, as we were most desirous to gain all the information we could as early as possible, and Mr. Stuart assured us that the addition of three persons would not be materially felt in their large family at Chipewyan, we determined on proceeding thither, and fixed on the 22d for our departure.

Pierre au Calumet receives its name from the place where the stone is procured, of which many of the pipes used by the Canadians and Indians are made. It is a clayey limestone, impregnated with various shells. The house, which is built on the summit of a steep bank, rising almost perpendicular to

the height of one hundred and eighty feet, commands an extensive prospect along this fine river, and over the plains which stretch out several miles at the back of it, bounded by hills of considerable height, and apparently better furnished with wood than the neighbourhood of the fort, where the trees grow very scantily. There had been an establishment belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company on the opposite bank of the river, but it was abandoned in December last, the residents not being able to procure provision, from their hunters having been disabled by the epidemic sickness, which has carried off one-third of the Indians in these parts. They belong to the Northern Crees, a name given them from their residing in the Athabasca department. There are now but few families of these men, who, formerly, by their numbers and predatory habits, spread terror among the natives of this part of the country.

There are springs of bituminous matter on several of the islands near these houses ; and the stones on the river-bank are much



impregnated with this useful substance. There is also another place remarkable for the production of a sulphureous salt, which is deposited on the surface of a round-backed hill about half a mile from the beach, and on the marshy ground underneath it. We visited these places at a subsequent period of the journey; and descriptions of them will appear in Dr. Richardson's Mineralogical Notices.

The latitude of the North-West Company's House is  $57^{\circ} 24' 06''$  N., but this was the only observation we could obtain, the atmosphere being cloudy. Mr. Stuart had an excellent thermometer, which indicated the lowest state of temperature to be  $43^{\circ}$  below zero. He told me  $45^{\circ}$  was the lowest temperature he had ever witnessed at the Athabasca or Great Slave Lake, after many years' residence. On the 21st it rose above zero, and at noon attained the height of  $43^{\circ}$ ; the atmosphere was sultry, snow fell constantly, and there was quite an appearance of a change in the season. On the 22d we parted from our hospitable

# JOURNEY TO THE SHORES OF THE POLAR SEA.

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## CHAPTER IV.

(CONTINUED.)

*Departure from Isle à la Crosse—Arrival at Fort  
Chipewyan.*

ON the 13th March, 1820, we renewed our journey and parted from Mr. Clark, to whom we were much obliged for his hospitality and kindness. We soon reached the Methye Portage, and had a very pleasant ride across it in our carioles. The track was good and led through groups of pines, so happily placed that it would not have required a great stretch of imagination to fancy our-

selves in a well-arranged park. We had now to cross a small lake, and then gradually ascended hills beyond it, until we arrived at the summit of a lofty chain of mountains commanding the most picturesque and romantic prospect we had yet seen in this country. Two ranges of high hills run parallel to each other for several miles, until the faint blue haze hides their particular characters, when they slightly change their course, and are lost to the view. The space between them is occupied by nearly a level plain, through which a river pursues a meandering course, and receives supplies from the creeks and rills issuing from the mountains on each side. The prospect was delightful even amid the snow, and though marked with all the cheerless characters of winter; how much more charming must it be when the trees are in leaf, and the ground is arrayed in summer verdure! Some faint idea of the difference was conveyed to my mind by witnessing the effect of the departing rays of a brilliant sun. The distant prospect, however, is surpassed in

grandeur by the wild scenery which appeared immediately below our feet. There the eye penetrates into vast ravines two or three hundred feet in depth, that are clothed with trees, and lie on either side of the narrow pathway descending to the river over eight successive ridges of hills. At one spot, termed the Cockscomb, the traveller stands insulated as it were on a small slip, where a false step might precipitate him into the glen. From this place Mr. Back took an interesting and accurate sketch, to allow time for which we encamped early, having come twenty-one miles.

The Methye Portage is about twelve miles in extent, and over this space the canoes and all their cargoes are carried, both in going to and from the Athabasca department. It is part of the range of mountains which separates the waters flowing south from those flowing north. According to Sir Alexander Mackenzie, "this range of hills continues in a S.W. direction until its local height is lost between the Saskatchewan and Elk Rivers, close on the

banks of the former, in latitude  $53^{\circ} 36' N.$ , longitude  $113^{\circ} 45' W.$ , when it appears to take its course due north." Observations, taken in the spring by Mr. Hood place the north side of the portage in latitude  $56^{\circ} 41' 40'' N.$ , longitude  $109^{\circ} 52' 15'' W.$ ; variation,  $25^{\circ} 2' 30'' E.$ ; dip,  $85^{\circ} 7' 27''$ .

At daylight on the 14th we began to descend the range of hills leading towards the river, and no small care was required to prevent the sledges from being broken in going down these almost perpendicular heights, or being precipitated into the glens on each side. As a precautionary measure the dogs were taken off, and the sledges guided by the men, notwithstanding which they descended with amazing rapidity, and the men were thrown into the most ridiculous attitudes in endeavouring to stop them. When we had arrived at the bottom I could not but feel astonished at the laborious task which the voyagers have twice in the year to encounter at this place, in conveying their stores backwards and forwards. We went across the Clear Water River, which



runs at the bases of these hills, and followed an Indian track along its northern bank, by which we avoided the White Mud and Good Portages. We afterwards followed the river as far as the Pine Portage, when we passed through a very romantic defile of rocks, which presented the appearance of Gothic ruins, and their rude characters were happily contrasted with the softness of the snow, and the darker foliage of the pines which crowned their summits. We next crossed the Cascade Portage, which is the last on the way to the Athabasca Lake, and soon afterwards came to some Indian tents, containing five families, belonging to the Chipewyan tribe. We smoked the calumet in the chief's tent, whose name was the Thumb, and distributed some tobacco and a weak mixture of spirits and water among the men. They received this civility with much less grace than the Crees, and seemed to consider it a matter of course. There was an utter neglect of cleanliness, and a total want of comfort in their tents; and the poor creatures were

miserably clothed. Mr. Frazer, who accompanied us from the Methye Lake, accounted for their being in this forlorn condition by explaining, that this band of Indians had recently destroyed everything they possessed, as a token of their great grief for the loss of their relatives in the prevailing sickness. It appears that no article is spared by these unhappy men when a near relative dies; their clothes and tents are cut to pieces, their guns broken, and every other weapon rendered useless, if some person do not remove these articles from their sight, which is seldom done. Mr. Back sketched one of the children, which delighted the father very much, who charged the boy to be very good, since his picture had been drawn by a great chief. We learned that they prize pictures very highly, and esteem any they can get, however badly executed, as efficient charms. They were unable to give us any information respecting the country beyond the Athabasca Lake, which is the boundary of their peregrinations to the northward.

Having been apprized of our coming, they had prepared an encampment for us; but we had witnessed too many proofs of their importunity to expect that we could pass the night near them in any comfort, whilst either spirits, tobacco, or sugar remained in our possession; and therefore preferred to go about two miles further along the river, and to encamp among a cluster of fine pine trees, after a journey of sixteen miles.

On the morning of the 15th, in proceeding along the river, we perceived a strong smell of sulphur, and on the north shore found a quantity of it scattered, which seemed to have been deposited by some spring in the neighbourhood; it appeared very pure and good. We continued our course the whole day along the river, which is about four hundred yards wide, has some islands, and is confined between low land, extending from the bases of the mountains on each side. We put up at the end of thirteen miles, and were then joined by a Chipewyan, who came, as we supposed, to serve as our guide to Pierre au Calumet,

but as none of the party could communicate with our new friend otherwise than by signs, we waited patiently until the morning to see what he intended to do. The wind blew a gale during the night, and the snow fell heavily. The next day our guide led us to the Pembina River, which comes from the southward, where we found traces of Indians, who appeared to have quitted this station the day before; we had, therefore, the benefit of a good track, which our dogs much required, as they were greatly fatigued, having dragged their loads through very deep snow for the last two days. A moose-deer crossed the river just before the party; this animal is plentiful in the vicinity. We encamped in a pleasant well-sheltered place, having travelled fourteen miles.

A short distance on the following morning brought us to some Indian lodges, which belonged to an old Chipewyan chief, named the Sun, and his family, consisting of five hunters, their wives and children. They were delighted to see us, and when

friend, and recommenced our journey, but under the expectation of seeing him again in May; at which time the partners of the Company usually assemble at Fort Chipewyan, where we hoped the necessary arrangements for our future proceedings would be completed. We encamped at sunset at the end of fourteen miles, having walked the whole way along the river, which preserves nearly a true north course, and is from four hundred to six hundred yards broad. The banks are high, and well clothed with the liard, spruce, fir, alder, birch-tree, and willows. Having come nineteen miles and a half, on the 23d, we encamped among pines of a great height and girth.

Showers of snow fell until noon on the following day, but we continued our journey along the river, whose banks and islands became gradually lower as we advanced, and less abundantly supplied with wood, except willows. We passed an old Canadian, who was resting his wearied dogs during the heat of the sun. He was carry-



ing meat from some Indian lodges to Fort Chipewyan, having a burden exceeding two hundred and fifty pounds on his sledge, which was dragged by two miserable dogs. He came up to our encampment after dark. We were much amused by the altercation that took place between him and our Canadian companions as to the qualifications of their respective dogs. This, however, is such a general topic of conversation among the voyagers in the encampment, that we should not probably have remarked it, had not the old man frequently offered to bet the whole of his wages that his two dogs, poor and lean as they were, would drag their load to the Athabasca Lake in less time than any three of theirs. Having expressed our surprise at his apparent temerity, he coolly said that the men from the lower countries did not understand the management of their dogs, and that he depended on his superior skill in driving; and we soon gathered from his remarks, that the voyagers of the Athabasca department consider themselves very superior to

any other. The only reasons which he could assign were, that they had borne their burdens across the terrible Methye Portage, and that they were accustomed to live harder and more precariously.

*March 25.*—Having now the guidance of the old Canadian, we sent forward the Indian and one of our men, with letters to the gentlemen of the Athabasca Lake. The rest of the party set off afterwards, and kept along the river until ten, when we branched off by portages into the Embarras River, the usual channel of communication in canoes with the lake. It is a narrow and serpentine stream, confined between alluvial banks which support pines, poplars, and willows. We had not advanced far before we overtook the two men despatched by us this morning. The stormy weather had compelled them to encamp, as there was too much drifting of the snow for any attempt to cross the lake. We were obliged, though most reluctantly, to follow their example; but comforted ourselves with the reflection that this was the first time we had been

stopped by the weather during our long journey, which was so near at an end. The gale afterwards increased, the squalls at night became very violent, disburdened the trees of the snow, and gave us the benefit of a continual fall of patches from them, in addition to the constant shower. We therefore quickly finished our suppers, and retired under the shelter of our blankets.

*March 26.*—The boisterous weather continued through the night, and it was not before six this morning that the wind became apparently moderate, and the snow ceased. Two of the Canadians were immediately sent off with letters to the gentlemen at Fort Chipewyan. After breakfast we also started, but our Indian friend, having a great indisposition to move in such weather, remained by the fire. We soon quitted the river, and after crossing a portage, a small lake, and a point of land, came to the borders of the Mamma-wee Lake. We then found our error as to the strength of the wind; and that the gale still blew violently, and there was so much drift-

ing of the snow as to cover the distant objects by which our course could be directed. We fortunately got a glimpse through this cloud of a cluster of islands in the direction of the houses, and decided on walking towards them; but in doing this we suffered very much from the cold, and were obliged to halt under the shelter of them, and await the arrival of our Indian guide. He conducted us between these islands, over a small lake, and by a swampy river, into the Athabasca Lake, from whence the establishments were visible. At four P.M. we had the pleasure of arriving at Fort Chipewyan, and of being received by Messrs. Keith and Black, the partners of the North-West Company in charge, in the most kind and hospitable manner. Thus terminated a winter's journey of eight hundred and fifty-seven miles, in the progress of which there was a great intermixture of agreeable and disagreeable circumstances. Could the amount of each be balanced, I suspect the latter would much preponderate; and amongst these the initiation into walking in snow-

shoes must be considered as prominent. The suffering it occasions can be but faintly imagined by a person who thinks upon the inconvenience of marching with a weight of between two and three pounds constantly attached to galled feet, and swelled ankles. Perseverance and practice only will enable the novice to surmount this pain.

The next evil is the being constantly exposed to witness the wanton and unnecessary cruelty of the men to their dogs, especially those of the Canadians, who beat them unmercifully, and habitually vent on them the most dreadful and disgusting imprecations. There are other inconveniences, which, though keenly felt during the day's journey, are speedily forgotten when, stretched out in the encampment before a large fire, you enjoy the social mirth of your companions, who usually pass the evening in recounting their former feats in travelling. At this time the Canadians are always cheerful and merry, and the only bar to their comfort arises from the frequent interruption occasioned by the dogs,



who are constantly prowling about the circle, and snatching at every kind of food that happens to be within their reach. These useful animals are a comfort to them afterwards, by the warmth they impart, when lying down by their side or feet, as they usually do. But the greatest gratifications a traveller in these regions enjoys, are derived from the hospitable welcome he receives at every trading post, however poor the means of the host may be; and from being disrobed even for a short time of the trappings of a voyager, and experiencing the pleasures of cleanliness.

The following are the estimated distances, in statute miles, which Mr. Back and I had travelled since our departure from Cumberland :

From Cumberland House to Carlton House	263
From Carlton to Isle à la Crosse . . . .	230
From Isle à la Crosse to north side of the Methye Portage . . . . .	124
From the Methye Portage to Fort Chipew- yan . . . . .	240

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857 miles.

## CHAPTER V.

*Transactions at Fort Chipewyan — Arrival of Dr. Richardson and Mr. Hood — Preparations for our Journey to the Northward.*

ON the 27th March, the day after our arrival at Fort Chipewyan, we called upon Mr. Mac Donald, the gentleman in charge of the Hudson's Bay Establishment called Fort Wedderburne, and delivered to him Governor Williams's circular Letter, which desired that every assistance should be given to further our progress, and a statement of the requisitions which we should have to make on his post.

Our first object was to obtain some certain information respecting our future route; and accordingly we received from one of the North-West Company's interpreters, named Beaulieu, a half-breed, who had been brought up amongst the Dog-ribbed and

Copper Indians, some satisfactory information, which we afterwards found tolerably correct, respecting the mode of reaching the Copper-mine River, which he had descended a considerable way, as well as of the course of that river to its mouth. The Copper Indians, however, he said, would be able to give us more accurate information as to the latter part of its course, as they occasionally pursue it to the sea. He sketched on the floor a representation of the river, and a line of coast according to his idea of it. Just as he had finished, an old Chipewyan Indian, named Black Meat, unexpectedly came in, and instantly recognised the plan. He then took the charcoal from Beaulieu, and inserted a track along the sea-coast, which he had followed in returning from a war excursion, made by his tribe against the Esquimaux. He detailed several particulars of the coast and the sea, which he represented as studded with well-wooded islands, and free from ice, close to the shore, in the month of July, but not to a great distance. He described two other

rivers to the eastward of the Copper-mine River, which also fall into the Northern Ocean. The Anatessy, which issues from the Contway-to or Rum Lake, and the Thloueea-tessy or Fish River, which rises near the eastern boundary of the Great Slave Lake; but he represented both of them as being shallow, and too much interrupted by barriers for being navigated in any other than small Indian canoes.

Having received this satisfactory intelligence, I wrote immediately to Mr. Smith, of the North-West Company, and Mr. M'Vicar, of the Hudson's Bay Company, the gentlemen in charge of the posts at the Great Slave Lake, to communicate the object of the expedition, and our proposed route; and to solicit any information they possessed, or could collect from the Indians, relative to the countries we had to pass through, and the best manner of proceeding. As the Copper Indians frequent the establishment on the north side of the lake, I particularly requested them to explain to that tribe the object of our visit, and to en-

deavour to procure from them some guides and hunters to accompany our party. Two Canadians were sent by Mr. Keith with these letters.

The month of April commenced with fine and clear, but extremely cold weather; unfortunately we were still without a thermometer, and could not ascertain the degrees of temperature. The coruscations of the Aurora were very brilliant almost every evening of the first week, and were generally of the most variable kind. On the 3d, they were particularly changeable. The first appearance exhibited three illuminated beams issuing from the horizon, in the north, east, and west points, and directed towards the zenith; in a few seconds these disappeared, and a complete circle was displayed, bounding the horizon at an elevation of fifteen degrees. There was a quick lateral motion in the attenuated beams of which this zone was composed. Its colour was a pale yellow, with an occasional tinge of red.

On the 8th of April the Indians saw some



geese in the vicinity of this lake, but none of the migratory birds appeared near the houses before the 15th, when some swans flew over. These are generally the first that arrive; the weather had been very stormy for the four preceding days, and this in all probability kept the birds from venturing farther north than where the Indians had first seen them.

In the middle of the month the snow began to waste daily, and by degrees it disappeared from the hills and the surface of the lake. On the 17th and 19th the Aurora appeared very brilliant in patches of light, bearing N. W. An old Cree Indian having found a beaver-lodge near to the fort, Mr. Keith, Back, and I, accompanied him to see the method of breaking into it, and their mode of taking those interesting animals. The lodge was constructed on the side of a rock in a small lake, having the entrance into it beneath the ice. The frames were formed of layers of sticks, the interstices being filled with mud, and the outside was plastered with earth and stones,

which the frost had so completely consolidated, that to break through required great labour, with the aid of the ice chisel, and the other iron instruments which the beaver hunters use. The chase, however, was unsuccessful, as the beaver had previously vacated the lodge.

On the 21st we observed the first geese that flew near the fort, and some were brought to the house on the 30th, but they were very lean. On the 25th flies were seen sporting in the sun, and on the 26th the Athabasca River, having broken up, overflowed the lake along its channel; but except where this water spread, there was no appearance of decay in the ice.

*May.*—During the first part of this month, the wind blew from the N.W., and the sky was cloudy. It generally thawed during the day, but froze at night. On the 2d the Aurora faintly gleamed through very dense clouds.

We had a long conversation with Mr. Dease of the North-West Company, who had recently arrived from his station at the

bottom of the Athabasca Lake. This gentleman, having passed several winters on the Mackenzie's River, and at the posts to the northward of Slave Lake, possessed considerable information respecting the Indians, and those parts of the country to which our inquiries were directed, which he very promptly and kindly communicated. During our conversation, an old Chipewyan Indian, named the Rabbit's Head, entered the room, to whom Mr. Dease referred for information on some point. We found from his answer that he was a step-son of the late chief Matonnabee, who had accompanied Mr. Hearne on his journey to the sea, and that he had himself been of the party, but being then a mere boy, he had forgotten many of the circumstances. He confirmed, however, the leading incidents related by Hearne, and was positive he reached the sea, though he admitted that none of the party had tasted the water. He represented himself to be the only survivor of that party. As he was esteemed a good Indian, I presented him with a medal, which he

received gratefully, and concluded a long speech upon the occasion, by assuring me he should preserve it carefully all his life. The old man afterwards became more communicative, and unsolicited began to relate the tradition of his tribe, respecting the discovery of the Copper Mine, which we thought amusing: and as the subject is somewhat connected with our future researches, I will insert the translation of it which was given at the time by Mr. Dease, though a slight mention of it has been made by Hearne.

“ The Chipewyans suppose the Esquimaux originally inhabited some land to the northward which is separated by the sea from this country; and that in the earliest ages of the world a party of these men came over and stole a woman from their tribe, whom they carried to this distant country and kept in a state of slavery. She was very unhappy in her situation, and effected her escape after many years residence among them. The forlorn creature

wandered about for some days in a state of uncertainty what direction to take, when she chanced to fall upon a beaten path, which she followed and was led to the sea. At the sight of the ocean her hope of being able to return to her native country vanished, and she sat herself down in despair and wept. A wolf now advanced to caress her, and having licked the tears from her eyes, walked into the water, and she perceived with joy that it did not reach up to the body of the animal; emboldened by this appearance, she instantly arose, provided two sticks to support herself, and determined on following the wolf. The first and second nights she proceeded on, without finding any increase in the depth of the water, and when fatigued rested herself on the sticks, whose upper ends she fastened together for the purpose. She was alarmed on the third morning by arriving at a deeper part, but resolved on going forward at any risk, rather than return; and her daring perseverance was crowned with success, by her attaining her native shore on the fifth



day. She fortunately came to a part where there was a beaten path, which she knew to be the track made by the rein-deer in their migrations. Here she halted and prepared some sort of weapon for killing them; as soon as this was completed, she had the gratification to behold several herds advancing along the road, and had the happiness of killing a sufficient number for her winter's subsistence, which she determined to pass at that place, and therefore formed a house for herself, after the manner she had learned from the Esquimaux. When spring came, and she emerged from her subterraneous dwelling, (for such the Chipewyans suppose it to have been,) she was astonished by observing a glittering appearance on a distant hill, which she knew was not produced by the reflection of the sun, and being at a loss to assign any other cause for it she resolved on going up to the shining object, and then found the hill was entirely composed of copper. She broke off several pieces, and finding it yielded so readily to her beating, it occurred to her that this

metal would be very serviceable to her countrymen, if she could find them again. While she was meditating on what was to be done, the thought struck her that it would be advisable to attach as many pieces of copper to her dress as she could, and then proceed into the interior, in search of some inhabitants, who, she supposed, would give her a favourable reception, on account of the treasure she had brought.

“It happened that she met her own relations, and the young men, elated with the account she had given of the hill, made her instantly return with them: which she was enabled to do, having taken the precaution of putting up marks to indicate the path. The party reached the spot in safety, but the story had a melancholy catastrophe. These youths, overcome by excess of joy, gave loose to their passions, and offered the grossest insults to their benefactress. She powerfully resisted them for some time, and when her strength was failing, fled to the point of the mountain, as the only place of security. The moment she had gained the

summit, the earth opened and ingulphed both herself and the mountain, to the utter dismay of the men, who were not more astonished at its sudden disappearance, than sorrowful for this just punishment of their wickedness. Ever since this event, the copper has only been found in small detached pieces on the surface of the earth."

On the 10th of May we were gratified by the appearance of spring, though the ice remained firm on the lake. The anemone (*pulsatilla*, pasque flower,) appeared this day in flower, the trees began to put forth their leaves, and the musquitoes visited the warm rooms. On the 17th and 18th there were frequent showers of rain, and much thunder and lightning. This moist weather caused the ice to waste so rapidly, that by the 24th it had entirely disappeared from the lake. The gentlemen belonging to both the Companies quickly arrived from the different posts in this department, bringing their winter's collection of furs,

which are forwarded from these establishments to the depôts.

I immediately waited on Mr. Colin Robertson, the agent of the Hudson's Company, and communicated to him, as I had done before to the several partners of the North-West Company, our plan, and the requisitions we should have to make on each Company, and I requested of all the gentlemen the favour of their advice and suggestions. As I perceived that the arrangement of their winter accounts, and other business, fully occupied them, I forbore further pressing the subject of our concerns for some days, until there was an appearance of despatching the first brigade of canoes. It then became necessary to urge their attention to them; but it was evident, from the determined commercial opposition, and the total want of intercourse between the two Companies, that we could not expect to receive any cordial advice, or the assurance of the aid of both, without devising some expedient to bring the par-

ties together. I therefore caused a tent to be pitched at a distance from both establishments, and solicited the gentlemen of both Companies to meet Mr. Back and myself there, for the purpose of affording us their combined assistance.

With this request they immediately complied; and on May 25th we were joined at the tent by Mr. Stuart and Mr. Grant, of the North-West Company, and Mr. Colin Robertson, of the Hudson's Bay Company, all of whom kindly gave very satisfactory answers to a series of questions which we had drawn up for the occasion, and promised all the aid in their power.

Furnished with the information thus obtained, we proceeded to make some arrangements respecting the obtaining of men, and the stores we should require for their equipment, as well as for presents to the Indians; and on the following day a requisition was made on the Companies for eight men each, and whatever useful stores they could supply. We learned with regret, that, in consequence of the recent lavish



expenditure of their goods in support of the opposition, their supply to us would, of necessity, be very limited. The men, too, were backward in offering their services, especially those of the Hudson's Bay Company, who demanded a much higher rate of wages than I considered it proper to grant.

*June 3.*—Mr. Smith, a partner of the North-West Company, arrived from the Great Slave Lake, bearing the welcome news that the principal Chief of the Copper Indians had received the communication of our arrival with joy, and given all the intelligence he possessed respecting the route to the sea-coast by the Copper-Mine River; and that he and a party of his men, at the instance of Mr. Wentzel, a clerk of the North-West Company, whom they wished might go along with them, had engaged to accompany the expedition as guides and hunters. They were to wait our arrival at Fort Providence, on the north side of the Slave Lake. Their information coincided with that given by Beaulieu. They had no doubt of our being able to obtain the means

of subsistence in travelling to the coast. This agreeable intelligence had a happy effect upon the Canadian voyagers, many of their fears being removed: several of them seemed now disposed to volunteer; and indeed, on the same evening, two men from the North-West Company offered themselves and were accepted.

*June 5.*—This day Mr. Back and I went over to Fort Wedderburne, to see Mr. Robertson respecting his quota of men. We learned from him that, notwithstanding his endeavours to persuade them, his most experienced voyagers still declined engaging without very exorbitant wages. After some hesitation, however, six men engaged with us, who were represented to be active and steady; and I also got Mr. Robertson's permission for St. Germain, an interpreter belonging to this Company, to accompany us from Slave Lake if he should choose. The bow-men and steers-men were to receive one thousand six hundred livres Halifax per annum, and the middle men one thousand two hundred, exclusive of

their necessary equipments; and they stipulated that their wages should be continued until their arrival in Montreal, or their rejoining the service of their present employers.

I delivered to Mr. Robertson an official request, that the stores we had left at York Factory and the Rock Depôt, with some other supplies, might be forwarded to Slave Lake by the first brigade of canoes which should come in. He also took charge of my letters addressed to the Admiralty. Five men were afterwards engaged from the North-West Company for the same wages, and under the same stipulations as the others, besides an interpreter for the Copper Indians; but this man required three thousand livres Halifax currency, which we were obliged to give him, as his services were indispensable.

The extreme scarcity of provision at the posts rendered it necessary to despatch all our men to the Mammawee Lake, where they might procure their own subsistence by fishing. The women and children

resident at the fort were also sent away for the same purpose; and no other families were permitted to remain at the houses after the departure of the canoes, than those belonging to the men who were required to carry on the daily duty.

The large party of officers and men, which had assembled here from the different posts in the department, was again quickly dispersed. The first brigade of canoes, laden with furs, was despatched to the depôt on May 30th, and the others followed in two or three days afterwards. Mr. Stuart, the senior partner of the North-West Company, quitted us for the same destination on June 4th; Mr. Robertson for his depôt on the next day, and on the 9th we parted with our friend Mr. Keith, to whose unremitting kindness we felt much indebted. I intrusted to his care a box containing some drawings by Mr. Back, the map of our route from Cumberland House, and the skin of a black beaver, (presented to the expedition by Mr. Smith,) with my official letters, addressed to the

Under Secretary of State. I wrote by each of these gentlemen to inform Dr. Richardson and Mr. Hood of the scarcity of stores at these posts, and to request them to procure all they possibly could on their route. Mr. Smith was left in charge of this post during the summer; this gentleman soon evinced his desire to further our progress by directing a new canoe to be built for our use, which was commenced immediately.

*June 21.* — This day an opportunity offered of sending letters to the Great Slave Lake; and I profited by it, to request Mr. Wentzel would accompany the expedition agreeably to the desire of the Copper Indians, communicating to him that I had received permission for him to do so from the partners of the North-West Company. Should he be disposed to comply with my invitation, I desired that he would go over to Fort Providence, and remain near the Indians whom he had engaged for our service. I feared lest they should become impatient at our unexpected delay, and, with the usual fickleness of the Indian cha-



racter, remove from the establishment before we could arrive. It had been my intention to go to them myself, could the articles, with which they expected to be presented on my arrival, have been provided at these establishments; but as they could not be procured, I was compelled to defer my visit until our canoes should arrive. Mr. Smith supposed that my appearance amongst them, without the means of satisfying any of their desires, would give them an unfavourable impression respecting the expedition, which would make them indifferent to exertion, if it did not even cause them to withdraw from their engagements.

The establishments at this place, Forts Chipewyan and Wedderburne, the chief posts of the Companies in this department, are conveniently situated for communicating with the Slave and Peace Rivers, from whence the canoes assemble in the spring and autumn; on the first occasion they bring the collection of furs which has been made at the different out-posts during the winter; and at the latter season they receive

a supply of stores for the equipment of the Indians in their vicinity. Fort Wedderburne is a small house, which was constructed on Coal Island about five years ago, when the Hudson's Bay Company recommenced trading in this part of the country. Fort Chipewyan has been built many years, and is an establishment of very considerable extent, conspicuously situated on a rocky point of the northern shore ; it has a tower, which can be seen at a considerable distance. This addition was made about eight years ago to watch the motions of the Indians, who intended, as it was then reported, to destroy the house and all its inhabitants. They had been instigated to this rash design by the delusive stories of one among them, who had acquired great influence over his companions by his supposed skill in necromancy. This fellow had prophesied that there would soon be a complete change in the face of their country ; that fertility and plenty would succeed to the present sterility ; and that the present race of white inhabitants, unless

they became subservient to the Indians, would be removed, and their place be filled by other traders, who would supply their wants in every possible manner. The poor deluded wretches, imagining they would hasten this happy change by destroying their present traders, of whose submission there was no prospect, threatened to extirpate them. None of these menaces, however, were put in execution. They were probably deterred from the attempt by perceiving that a most vigilant guard was kept against them.

The portion of this extensive lake which is near the establishments, is called "The Lake of the Hills," not improperly, as the northern shore and the islands are high and rocky. The south side, however, is quite level, consisting of alluvial land, subject to be flooded, lying betwixt the different mouths of the Elk River, and much intersected by water. The rocks of the northern shore are composed of sienite, over which the soil is thinly spread; it is, however, sufficient to support a variety of firs and

poplars, and many shrubs, lichens, and mosses. The trees were now in full foliage, the plants generally in flower, and the whole scene quite enlivening. There can scarcely be a higher gratification than that which is enjoyed in this country in witnessing the rapid change which takes place in the course of a few days in the spring; scarcely does the snow disappear from the ground, before the trees are clothed with thick foliage, the shrubs open their leaves, and put forth their variegated flowers, and the whole prospect becomes animating. The spaces between the rocky hills, being for the most part swampy, support willows and a few poplars. These spots are the favourite resort of the musquitoes, which incessantly torment the unfortunate persons who have to pass through them.

Some of the hills attain an elevation of five or six hundred feet, at the distance of a mile from the house; and from their summits a very picturesque view is commanded of the lake, and of the surrounding country. The land above the Great Point

at the confluence of the main stream of the Elk River is six or seven hundred feet high, and stretches in a southern direction behind Pierre au Calumet. Opposite to that establishment, on the west side of the river, at some distance in the interior, the Bark Mountain rises and ranges to the N.W., until it reaches Clear Lake, about thirty miles to the southward of these forts, and then goes to the south-westward. The Cree Indians generally procure from this range their provision, as well as the bark for making their canoes. There is another range of hills on the south shore, which runs towards the Peace River.

The residents of these establishments depend for subsistence almost entirely on the fish which this lake affords; they are usually caught in sufficient abundance throughout the winter, though at the distance of eighteen miles from the houses; on the thawing of the ice, the fish remove into some smaller lakes, and the rivers on the south shore. Though they are nearer to the forts than in winter, it frequently



happens that high winds prevent the canoes from transporting them thither, and the residents are kept in consequence without a supply of food for two or three days together. The fish caught in the net are the attihawmegh, trout, carp, methye and pike.

The traders also get supplied by the hunters with buffalo and moose deer meat, (which animals are found at some distance from the forts,) but the greater part of it is either in a dried state, or pounded ready for making pemmican ; and is required for the men whom they keep travelling during the winter to collect the furs from the Indians, and for the crews of the canoes on their outward passage to the depôts in spring. There was a great want of provision this season, and both the Companies had much difficulty to provide a bare sufficiency for their different brigades of canoes. Mr. Smith assured me that after the canoes had been despatched he had only five hundred pounds of meat remaining for the use of the men who might travel from the post during the summer, and that five years pre-

ceding there had been thirty thousand pounds in store under similar circumstances. He ascribed this amazing difference more to the indolent habits which the Indians had acquired since the commercial struggle commenced, than to their recent sickness, mentioning, in confirmation of his opinion, that they could now, by the produce of little exertion, obtain whatever they demanded from either establishment.

At the opening of the water in spring, the Indians resort to the establishments to settle their accounts with the traders, and to procure the necessaries they require for the summer. This meeting is generally a scene of much riot and confusion, as the hunters receive such quantities of spirits as to keep them in a state of intoxication for several days. This spring, however, owing to the great deficiency of spirits, we had the gratification of seeing them generally sober. They belong to the great family of the Chipewyan, or Northern Indians; dialects of their language being spoken in the Peace and Mackenzie's Rivers, and by the popu-

ious tribes in New Caledonia, as ascertained by Sir Alexander Mackenzie in his journey to the Pacific. They style themselves generally *Dinneh* men, or Indians, but each tribe, or horde, adds some distinctive epithet taken from the name of the river, or lake, on which they hunt, or the district from which they last migrated. Those who come to Fort Chipewyan term themselves Saw-eessaw-dinneh, (Indians from the rising sun, or Eastern Indians,) their original hunting grounds being between the Athabasca and Great Slave Lakes, and Churchill River. This district, more particularly termed the Chipewyan lands, or *barren country*, is frequented by numerous herds of rein-deer, which furnish easy subsistence and clothing to the Indians; but the traders endeavour to keep them in the parts to the westward where the beavers resort. There are about one hundred and sixty hunters who carry their furs to the Great Slave Lake, forty to Hay River, and two hundred and forty to Fort Chipewyan. A few Northern Indians also resort to the posts at

the bottom of the Lake of the Hills, on Red Deer Lake, and to Churchill. The distance, however, of the latter post from their hunting grounds, and the sufferings to which they are exposed in going thither from want of food, have induced those, who were formerly accustomed to visit it, to convey their furs to some nearer station.

These people are so minutely described by Hearne and Mackenzie, that little can be added by a passing stranger, whose observations were made during short interviews, and when they were at the forts, where they lay aside many of their distinguishing characteristics, and strive to imitate the manners of the voyagers and traders.

The Chipewyans are by no means prepossessing in appearance: they have broad faces, projecting cheek-bones and wide nostrils; but they have generally good teeth, and fine eyes. When at the fort they imitate the dress of the Canadians, except that, instead of trowsers, they prefer the Indian stockings, which only reach from the thigh to the ancle, and in place of the

waistband they have a piece of cloth round the middle which hangs down loosely before and behind. Their hunting dress consists of a leathern shirt and stockings, over which a blanket is thrown, the head being covered with a fur cap or band. Their manner is reserved, and their habits are selfish; they beg with unceasing importunity for every thing they see. I never saw men who either received or bestowed a gift with such bad grace; they almost snatch the thing from you in the one instance, and throw it at you in the other. It could not be expected that such men should display in their tents the amiable hospitality which prevails generally amongst the Indians of this country. A stranger may go away hungry from their lodges, unless he possess sufficient impudence to thrust, uninvited, his knife into the kettle, and help himself. The owner, indeed, never deigns to take any notice of such an act of rudeness, except by a frown, it being beneath the dignity of a hunter to make disturbance about a piece of meat.



As some relief to the darker shades of their character it should be stated that instances of theft are extremely rare amongst them. They profess strong affection for their children, and some regard for their relations, who are often numerous, as they trace very far the ties of consanguinity. A curious instance of the former was mentioned to us, and so well authenticated, that I shall venture to give it in the words of Dr. Richardson's Journal.

“A young Chipewyan had separated from the rest of his band for the purpose of trenching beaver, when his wife, who was his sole companion, and in her first pregnancy, was seized with the pains of labour. She died on the third day after she had given birth to a boy. The husband was inconsolable, and vowed in his anguish never to take another woman to wife, but his grief was soon in some degree absorbed in anxiety for the fate of his infant son. To preserve its life he descended to the office of nurse, so degrading in the eyes of a Chipewyan, as partaking of

the duties of a woman. He swaddled it in soft moss, fed it with broth made from the flesh of the deer, and to still its cries applied it to his breast, praying earnestly to the great Master of Life, to assist his endeavours. The force of the powerful passion by which he was actuated produced the same effect in his case, as it has done in some others which are recorded: a flow of milk actually took place from his breast. He succeeded in rearing his child, taught him to be a hunter, and when he attained the age of manhood, chose him a wife from the tribe. The old man kept his vow in never taking a second wife himself, but he delighted in tending his son's children, and when his daughter-in-law used to interfere, saying, that it was not the occupation of a man, he was wont to reply, that he had promised to the great Master of Life, if his child were spared, never to be proud, like the other Indians. He used to mention, too, as a certain proof of the approbation of Providence, that, although he was always obliged to carry his child on his back while

hunting, yet that it never roused a moose by its cries, being always particularly still at those times. Our informant\* added, that he had often seen this Indian in his old age, and that his left breast, even then, retained the unusual size it had acquired in his occupation of nurse."

We had proof of their sensibility towards their relations, in their declining to pitch their tents where they had been accustomed for many years, alleging a fear of being reminded of the happy hours they had formerly spent there, in the society of the affectionate relatives whom the sickness had recently carried off. The change of situation, however, had not the effect of relieving them from sorrowful impressions, and they occasionally indulged in very loud lamentations, as they sat in groups, within and without their tents. Unfortunately, the spreading of a severe dysentery amongst them, at this time, gave occasion for the renewal of their grief. The medicinal

\* Mr. Wentzel.

charms of drumming and singing were plentifully applied, and once they had recourse to conjuring over a sick person. I was informed, however, that the Northern Indians do not make this expedient for the cure of a patient so often as the Crees; but when they do, the conjuror is most assiduous, and suffers great personal fatigue. Particular persons only are trained in the mysteries of the art of conjuring, to procure the recovery of the sick, or to disclose future events.

On extraordinary occasions the man remains in his narrow conjuring tent, for days, without eating, before he can determine the matter to his satisfaction. When he is consulted about the sick, the patient is shut up with him; but on other occasions he is alone, and the poor creature often works his mind up to a pitch of illusion that can scarcely be imagined by one who has not witnessed it. His deluded companions seat themselves round his tent, and await his communication with earnest anxiety, yet during the progress of his

manœuvres, they often venture to question him, as to the disposition of the Great Spirit.

These artful fellows usually gain complete ascendancy over the minds of their companions. They are supported by voluntary contributions of provision, that their minds may not be diverted, by the labour of hunting, from the peculiar duties of their profession.

The Chiefs among the Chipewyans are now totally without power. The presents of a flag, and a gaudy dress, still bestowed on them by the traders, do not procure for them any respect or obedience, except from the youths of their own families. This is to be attributed mainly to their living at peace with their neighbours, and to the facility which the young men find in getting their wants supplied independent of the recommendation of the chiefs, which was formerly required. In war excursions, boldness and intrepidity would still command respect and procure authority; but the influence thus acquired would, probably, cease with the occasion that called it



forth. The traders, however, endeavour to support their authority by continuing towards them the accustomed marks of respect, hoisting the flag and firing a salute of musketry on their entering the fort.

The chief halts at a distance from the house, and despatches one of his young men to announce his approach, and to bring his flag, which is carried before him when he arrives. The messenger carries back to him some vermilion to ornament the faces of his party, together with a looking-glass and comb, some tobacco, and a few rounds of ammunition, that they may return the salute. These men paint round the eyes, the forehead, and the cheek-bones.

The Northern Indians evince no little vanity, by assuming to themselves the comprehensive title of "The People," whilst they designate all other nations by the name of their particular country. If men were seen at a distance, and a Chipewyan was asked who those persons were, he would answer, The People, if he recognised them to belong to his tribe, and never Chipew-

yans; but he would give them their respective names, if they were Europeans, Canadians, or Cree Indians.

As they suppose their ancestors to come originally from the east, those who happen to be born in the eastern part of their territory, are considered to be of the purest race. I have been informed, that all the Indians who trade at the different posts in the north-west parts of America, imagine that their forefathers came from the east, except the Dog-ribs, who reside between the Copper Indian Islands and the Mackenzie's River, and who deduce their origin from the west, which is the more remarkable, as they speak a dialect of the Chipewyan language. I could gather no information respecting their religious opinions, except that they have a tradition of the deluge.

The Chipewyans are considered to be less expert hunters than the Crees, which probably arises from their residing much on the barren lands, where the rein-deer are so numerous that little skill is requisite. A good hunter, however, is highly esteemed

among them. The facility of procuring goods, since the commercial opposition commenced, has given great encouragement to their native indolence of disposition, as is manifested by the difference in the amount of their collections of furs and provision between the late and former years. From six to eight hundred packs of furs used formerly to be sent from this department, now the return seldom exceeds half that amount. The decrease in the provision has been already mentioned.

The Northern Indians suppose that they originally sprang from a dog; and about five years ago, a superstitious fanatic so strongly pressed upon their minds the impropriety of employing these animals, to which they were related, for purposes of labour, that they universally resolved against using them any more, and, strange as it may seem, destroyed them. They have now to drag every thing themselves on sledges. This laborious task falls most heavily on the women; nothing can more shock the feelings of a person accustomed to civilized

life, than to witness the state of their degradation. When a party is on a march the women have to drag the tent, the meat, and whatever the hunter possesses, whilst he only carries his gun and medicine case. In the evening they form the encampment, cut wood, fetch water, and prepare the supper; and then, perhaps, are not permitted to partake of the fare until the men have finished. A successful hunter sometimes has two or three wives; whoever happens to be the favourite assumes authority over the others, and has the management of the tent. These men usually treat their wives unkindly, and even with harshness; except, indeed, when they are about to increase the family, and then they show them much indulgence.

Hearne charges the Chipewyans, with the dreadful practice of abandoning, in extremity, their aged and sick people. The only instance that came under our personal notice was attended with some palliating circumstances:—An old woman arrived at Fort Chipewyan, during our residence, with

her son, a little boy, about ten years old, both of whom had been deserted by their relations, and left in an encampment, when much reduced by sickness: two or three days after their departure the woman gained a little strength, and with the assistance of the boy, was enabled to paddle a canoe to the fishing station of this post, where they were supported for some days, until they were enabled to proceed in search of some other relations who, they expected, would treat them with more kindness. I learned, that the woman bore an extremely bad character, having even been guilty of infanticide, and that her companions considered her offences merited the desertion.

This tribe, since its present intimate connexion with the traders, has discontinued its war excursions against the Esquimaux, but they still speak of that nation in terms of the most inveterate hatred. We have only conversed with four men who have been engaged in any of those expeditions; all these confirm the statements of Blackmeat respecting the sea-coast. Our obser-



vations concerning the half-breed population in this vicinity, coincided so exactly with those which have been given of similar persons in Dr. Richardson's account of the Crees, that any statement respecting them at this place is unnecessary. Both the Companies have wisely prohibited their servants from intermarrying with pure Indian women, which was formerly the cause of many quarrels with the tribes.

The weather was extremely variable during the month of June; we scarcely had two clear days in succession, and the showers of rain were frequent; the winds were often strong, and generally blowing from the north-east quarter. On the evening of the 16th the Aurora Borealis was visible, but after that date the nights were too light for our discerning it.

The mosquitoes swarmed in great numbers about the house, and tormented us so incessantly by their irritating stings, that we were compelled to keep our rooms constantly filled with smoke, which is the only means of driving them away: the weather

indeed was now warm. Having received one of Dollond's eighteen-inch spirit thermometers from Mr. Stuart, which he had the kindness to send us from his post at Pierre au Calumet, after he had learned that ours had been rendered useless, I observed the temperature, at noon, on the 25th of June, to be  $63^{\circ}$ .

On the following morning we made an excursion, accompanied by Mr. Smith, round the fishing stations on the south side of the lake, for the purpose of visiting our men; we passed several groups of women and children belonging to both the forts, posted wherever they could find a sufficiently dry spot for an encampment. At length we came to our men, pitched upon a narrow strip of land, situated between two rivers. Though the portion of dry ground did not exceed fifty yards, yet they appeared to be living very comfortably, having formed huts with the canoe's sail and covering, and were amply supported by the fish their nets daily furnished. They sometimes had a change in their fare, by

procuring a few ducks and other water-fowl, which resort in great abundance to the marshes, by which they were surrounded.

*July 2*—The canoe, which was ordered to be built for our use, was finished. As it was constructed after the manner described by Hearne, and several of the American travellers, a detail of the process will be unnecessary. Its extreme length was thirty-two feet six inches, including the bow and stern pieces, its greatest breadth was four feet ten inches, but it was only two feet nine inches forward where the bowman sat, and two feet four inches behind where the steersman was placed; and its depth was one foot eleven and a quarter inches. There were seventy-three hoops of thin cedar, and a layer of slender laths of the same wood within the frame. These feeble vessels of bark will carry twenty-five pieces of goods, each weighing ninety pounds, exclusive of the necessary provision and baggage for the crew of five or six men, amounting in the whole to about three thousand three hun-

dred pounds' weight. This great lading they annually carry between the depôts and the posts, in the interior; and it rarely happens that any accidents occur, if they be managed by experienced bowmen and steersmen, on whose skill the safety of the canoe entirely depends in the rapids and difficult places. When a total portage is made, these two men carry the canoe, and they often run with it, though its weight is estimated at about three hundred pounds, exclusive of the poles and oars, which are occasionally left in where the distance is short.

On the 5th, we made an excursion for the purpose of trying our canoe. A heavy gale came on in the evening, which caused a great swell in the lake, and in crossing the waves we had the satisfaction to find that our birchen vessel proved an excellent sea-boat.

*July 7.*—This morning some men and their families, who had been sent off to search for Indians with whom they intended to pass the summer, returned to the fort

in consequence of a serious accident having befallen their canoe in the Red Deer River; when they were in the act of hauling up a strong rapid, the line broke, the canoe was overturned, and two of the party narrowly escaped drowning; fortunately the women and children happened to be on shore, or, in all probability, they would have perished in the confusion of the scene. Nearly all their stores, their guns, and fishing nets, were lost, and they could not procure any other food for the last four days than some unripe berries.

Some gentlemen arrived in the evening with a party of Chipewyan Indians, from Hay River, a post between the Peace River, and the Great Slave Lake. These men gave distressing accounts of sickness among their relatives, and the Indians in general along the Peace River, and they said many of them have died. The disease was described as dysentery. On the 10th and 11th we had very sultry weather, and were dreadfully tormented by musquitoes. The highest temperature was  $73^{\circ}$ .



*July 13.*—This morning Mr. Back and I had the sincere gratification of welcoming our long-separated friends, Dr. Richardson and Mr. Hood, who arrived in perfect health with two canoes, having made a very expeditious journey from Cumberland, notwithstanding they were detained near three days in consequence of the melancholy loss of one of their bowmen, by the upsetting of a canoe in a strong rapid; but, as the occurrences of this journey, together with the mention of some other circumstances that happened previous to their departure from Cumberland, which have been extracted from Mr. Hood's narrative, will appear in the following chapter, it will be unnecessary to enter farther into these points now.

The zeal and talent displayed by Dr. Richardson and Mr. Hood, in the discharge of their several duties since my separation from them, drew forth my highest approbation. These gentlemen had brought all the stores they could procure from the establishments at Cumberland and Isle à la Crosse; and at the latter place they had

received ten bags of pemmican from the North-West Company, which proved to be mouldy, and so totally unfit for use, that it was left at the Methye Portage. They got none from the Hudson's Bay Post. The voyagers belonging to that Company, being destitute of provision, had eaten what was intended for us. In consequence of these untoward circumstances, the canoes arrived with only one day's supply of this most essential article. The prospect of having to commence our journey from hence, almost destitute of provision, and scantily supplied with stores, was distressing to us, and very discouraging to the men. It was evident, however, that any unnecessary delay here would have been very imprudent, as Fort Chipewyan did not, at the present time, furnish the means of subsistence for so large a party, much less was there a prospect of our receiving any supply to carry us forward. We, therefore, hastened to make the necessary arrangements for our speedy departure. All the stores were demanded that could

possibly be spared from both the establishments ; and we rejoiced to find, that when this collection was added to the articles that had been brought up by the canoes, we had a sufficient quantity of clothing for the equipment of the men who had been engaged here, as well as to furnish a present to the Indians, besides some few goods for the winter's consumption ; but we could not procure any ammunition, which was the most essential article, or spirits, and but little tobacco.

We then made a final arrangement respecting the voyagers, who were to accompany the party ; and, fortunately, there was no difficulty in doing this, as Dr. Richardson and Mr. Hood had taken the very judicious precaution of bringing up ten men from Cumberland, who were engaged to proceed forward if their services were required. The Canadians, whom they brought, were most desirous of being continued, and we felt sincere pleasure in being able to keep men who were so zealous in the cause, and who had given proofs of their activity

on their recent passage to this place, by discharging those men who were less willing to undertake the journey; of these, three were Englishmen, one American, and three Canadians. When the numbers were completed, which we had been recommended by the traders to take as a protection against the Esquimaux, we had sixteen Canadian-voyagers, and our worthy and only English attendant John Hepburn, besides the two interpreters whom we were to receive at the Great Slave Lake; we were also accompanied by a Chipewyan woman. An equipment of goods was given to each of the men who had been engaged at this place, similar to what had been furnished to the others at Cumberland; and when this distribution had been made, the remainder were made up into bales, preparatory to our departure, on the following day. We were cheerfully assisted in these and all our occupations by Mr. Smith, who evinced an anxious desire to supply our wants as far as his means permitted.

Mr. Hood having brought up the dipping

needle from Cumberland House, we ascertained the dip to be  $85^{\circ} 23' 42''$ , and the difference produced by reversing the face of the instrument was  $6^{\circ} 2' 10''$ . The intensity of the magnetic force was also observed. Several observations had been procured on both sides of the moon during our residence at Fort Chipewyan, the result of which gave for its longitude  $111^{\circ} 18' 20''$  W., its latitude was observed to be  $58^{\circ} 42' 38''$  N., and the variation of the compass  $22^{\circ} 49' 32''$  E. Fresh rates were procured for the chronometers and their errors determined for Greenwich time, by which the survey to the northward was carried on.

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## CHAPTER VI.

*Mr. Hood's Journey to the Basquiau Hill—Sojourns with an Indian Party—His Journey to Chipewyan.*

BEING desirous of obtaining a drawing of a moose-deer, and also of making some observation on the height of the Aurora, I set out on the 23d March, to pass a few days at the Basquiau Hill. Two men accompanied me, with dogs and sledges, who were going to the hill for meat. We found the Saskatchewan open and were obliged to follow it several miles to the eastward. We did not then cross it without wading in water, which had overflowed the ice; and our snow shoes were encumbered with a heavy weight for the remainder of the day. On the south bank of the Saskatchewan were some poplars ten or twelve feet in circumference at the root. Beyond the river we traversed an extensive swamp,

bounded by woods. In the evening we crossed the Swan Lake, about six miles in breadth, and eight in length, and halted on its south side for the night, twenty-four miles S.S.W. of Cumberland House.

At four in the morning of the 24th, we continued the journey, and crossed some creeks in the woods, and another large swamp. These swamps are covered with water in summer, to the depth of several feet, which arises from the melted snow from the higher grounds. The tracks of foxes, wolves, wolverenes, and martens, were very numerous. The people employed in carrying meat, set traps on their way out, and take possession of their captures at their return, for which they receive a sum from the Company, proportioned to the value of the fur.

In the evening we crossed the Goose Lake, which is a little longer than Swan Lake, and afterwards the River Sepanach, a branch of the Saskatchewan, forming an island extending thirty miles above, and forty below Cumberland House. We

turned to the westward on the Root River, which enters the Sepanach, and halted on its banks having made in direct distance not more than twenty miles since the 23d.

We passed the Shoal Lake on the 25th, and then marched twelve miles through woods and swamps to a hunting tent of the Indians. It was situated in a grove of large poplars, and would have been no unpleasant residence, if we could have avoided the smoke. A heavy gale from the westward, with snow, confined us for several days to this tent. On the 30th two Indians arrived, one of whom, named the Warrior, was well known at the house. We endeavoured to prevail upon them to set out in quest of moose, which they agreed to do on receiving some rum. Promises were of no avail; the smallest present gratification is preferred to the certainty of ample reward at another period; an unfailing indication of strong animal passions, and a weak understanding. On our compliance with their demand they departed.

The next day I went to the Warrior's

tent, distant about eleven miles. The country was materially changed, the pine had disappeared, and gentle slopes, with clumps of large poplars, formed some pleasing groups; willows were scattered over the swamps. When I entered the tent, the Indians spread a buffalo robe before the fire, and desired me to sit down. Some were eating, others sleeping, many of them without any covering except the breech cloth and a blanket over the shoulders; a state in which they love to indulge themselves, till hunger drives them forth to the chase. Besides the Warrior's family, there was that of another hunter named *Long-legs*, whose bad success in hunting had reduced him to the necessity of feeding on moose leather for three weeks, when he was compassionately relieved by the Warrior. I was an unwilling witness of the preparation of my dinner by the Indian women. They cut into pieces a portion of fat meat, using for that purpose a knife and their teeth. It was boiled in a kettle, and served in a platter made of birch-bark, from which,

being dirty, they had peeled the surface. However, the flavour of good moose meat will survive any process that it undergoes in their hands, except smoking.

Having provided myself with some drawing materials, I amused the Indians with a sketch of the interior of the tent and its inhabitants. An old woman, who was relating with great volubility an account of some quarrel with the traders at Cumberland House, broke off from her narration when she perceived my design; supposing perhaps, that I was employing some charm against her; for the Indians have been taught a supernatural dread of particular pictures. One of the young men drew, with a piece of charcoal, a figure resembling a frog, on the side of the tent, and by significantly pointing at me, excited peals of merriment from his companions. The caricature was comic; but I soon fixed their attention, by producing my pocket compass, and affecting it with a knife. They have great curiosity, which might easily be directed to the attainment of



useful knowledge. As the dirt accumulated about these people was visibly of a communicative nature, I removed at night into the open air, where the thermometer fell to  $15^{\circ}$  below zero, although it was the next day  $60^{\circ}$  above it.

In the morning the Warrior and his companion arrived; I found that, instead of hunting, they had passed the whole time in a drunken fit, at a short distance from the tent. In reply to our angry questions, the Warrior held out an empty vessel, as if to demand the payment of a debt, before he entered into any new negotiation. Not being inclined to starve his family, we set out for another Indian tent, ten miles to the southward, but we found only the frame, or tent poles, standing when we reached the spot. The men, by digging where the fire place had been, ascertained that the Indians had quitted it the day before; and as their marches are short, when encumbered with the women and baggage, we sought out their track and followed it. At an abrupt angle of it, which was obscured by trees,

the men suddenly disappeared; and hastening forward to discover the cause, I perceived them both still rolling at the foot of a steep cliff, over which they had been dragged while endeavouring to stop the descent of their sledges. The dogs were gazing silently, with the wreck of their harness about them, and the sledges deeply buried in the snow. The effects of this accident did not detain us long, and we proceeded afterwards with greater caution.

The air was warm at noon, and the solitary, but sweet notes of the jay, the earliest spring bird, were in every wood. Late in the evening we descried the ravens wheeling in circles round a small grove of poplars, and, according to our expectations, found the Indians encamped there.

The men were absent hunting, and returned unsuccessful. They had been several days without provisions, and thinking that I could depend upon the continuance of their exertions, I gave them a little rum; the next day they set out, and at midnight

they swept by us with their dogs in close pursuit.

In the morning we found that a moose had eaten the bark of a tree near our fire. The hunters, however, again failed; and they attributed the extreme difficulty of approaching the chase, to the calmness of the weather, which enabled it to hear them at a great distance.

They concluded as usual, when labouring under any affliction, that they were tormented by the evil spirit; and assembled to beat a large tambourine, and sing an address to the Manito or deity, praying for relief, according to the explanation which I received; but their prayer consisted of only three words, constantly repeated. One of the hunters yet remained abroad; and as the wind rose at noon, we had hopes that he was successful. In the evening he made his appearance, and announcing that he had killed a large moose, immediately secured the reward which had been promised.

The tidings were received with apparent indifference, by people whose lives are alternate changes from the extremity of want to abundance. But as their countenances seldom betray their emotions, it cannot be determined whether their apathy is real or affected. However, the women prepared their sledges and dogs, with the design of dismembering, and bringing home, the carcass; a proceeding to which, in their necessitous condition, I could have had neither reasonable nor available objections, without giving them a substitute. By much solicitation I obtained an audience, and offered them our own provisions, on condition of their suspending the work of destruction till the next day. They agreed to the proposition, and we set out with some Indians for the place where the animal was lying. The night advancing, we were separated by a snow storm, and not being skilful enough to follow tracks which were so speedily filled up, I was bewildered for several hours in the woods, when I met with an Indian, who led me back at such a pace that I was

always in the rear, to his infinite diversion. The Indians are vain of their local knowledge, which is certainly very wonderful. Our companions had taken out the entrails and young of the moose, which they buried in the snow.

The Indians then returned to the tents, and one of my men accompanied them; he was the person charged with the management of the trade at the hunting tent; and he observed, that the opportunity of making a bargain with the Indians, while they were drinking, was too advantageous to be lost.

It remained for us to prevent the wolves from mangling the moose; for which purpose we wrapped ourselves in blankets between its feet, and placed the hatchets within our reach. The night was stormy, and apprehension kept me long awake; but finding my companion in so deep a sleep that nothing could have roused him except the actual gripe of a wolf, I thought it advisable to imitate his example, as much as was in my power, rather than bear the bur-



then of anxiety alone. At day-light we shook off the snow which was heaped upon us, and endeavoured to kindle a fire; but the violence of the storm defeated all our attempts. At length two Indians arrived, with whose assistance we succeeded, and they took possession of it, to show their sense of our obligations to them. We were ashamed of the scene before us; the entrails of the moose and its young, which had been buried at our feet, bore testimony to the nocturnal revel of the wolves, during the time we had slept. This was a fresh subject of derision for the Indians, whose appetites, however, would not suffer them to waste long upon us a time so precious. They soon finished what the wolves had begun, and with as little aid from the art of cookery, eating both the young moose, and the contents of the paunch, raw.

I had scarcely secured myself by a lodge of branches from the snow, and placed the moose in a position for my sketch, when we were stormed by a troop of women and children, with their sledges and dogs. We

obtained another short respite from the Indians, but our blows could not drive, nor their caresses entice, the hungry dogs from the tempting feast before them.

I had not finished my sketch before the impatient crowd tore the moose to pieces, and loaded their sledges with meat. On our way to the tent, a black wolf rushed out upon an Indian, who happened to pass near its den. It was shot, and the Indians carried away three black whelps, to improve the breed of their dogs. I purchased one of them, intending to send it to England, but it perished for want of proper nourishment.

The latitude of these tents, was  $53^{\circ} 12' 46''$  N., and longitude by chronometers  $103^{\circ} 13' 10''$  W. On the 5th of April we set out for the hunting tent by our former track, and arrived there in the evening.

As the increasing warmth of the weather had threatened to interrupt communication by removing the ice, orders had been sent from Cumberland House to the people at the tent, to quit it without delay; which

we did on the 7th. Some altitudes of the Aurora were obtained.

We had a fine view, at sun-rise, of the Basquiau Hill, skirting half the horizon with its white sides, chequered by forests of pine. It is seen from Pine Island Lake, at the distance of fifty miles; and cannot, therefore, be less than three-fourths of a mile in perpendicular height; probably the greatest elevation between the Atlantic Ocean, and the Rocky Mountains.

A small stream runs near the hunting tent, strongly impregnated with salt. There are several salt springs about it, which are not frozen during the winter.

The surface of the snow, thawing in the sun, and freezing at night, had become a strong crust, which sometimes gave way in a circle round our feet, immersing us in the soft snow beneath. The people were afflicted with snow blindness; a kind of ophthalmia occasioned by the reflection of the sun's rays in the spring.

The miseries endured during the first journey of this nature, are so great, that

nothing could induce the sufferer to undertake a second, while under the influence of present pain. He feels his frame crushed by unaccountable pressure, he drags a galling and stubborn weight at his feet, and his track is marked with blood. The dazzling scene around him affords no rest to his eye, no object to divert his attention from his own agonizing sensations. When he arises from sleep, half his body seems dead, till quickened into feeling by the irritation of his sores. But fortunately for him, no evil makes an impression so evanescent as pain. It cannot be wholly banished, nor recalled with the force of reality, by any act of the mind, either to affect our determinations, or to sympathise with another. The traveller soon forgets his sufferings, and at every future journey their recurrence is attended with diminished acuteness.

It was not before the 10th or 12th of April, that the return of the swans, geese, and ducks, gave certain indications of the advance of spring. The juice of the maple-

tree began to flow, and the women repaired to the woods for the purpose of collecting it. This tree, which abounds to the southward, is not, I believe, found to the northward of the Saskatchewan. The Indians obtain the sap by making incisions into the tree. They boil it down, and evaporate the water, skimming off the impurities. They are so fond of sweets that, after this simple process, they set an extravagant price upon it.

On the 15th fell the first shower of rain we had seen for six months, and on the 17th the thermometer rose to  $77^{\circ}$  in the shade. The whole face of the country was deluged by the melted snow. All the nameless heaps of dirt, accumulated in the winter, now floated over the very thresholds, and the long-imprisoned scents dilated into vapours so penetrating, that no retreat was any security from them. The flood descended into the cellar below our house, and destroyed a quantity of powder and tea; a loss irreparable in our situation.

The noise made by the frogs which this



inundation produced, is almost incredible. There is strong reason to believe that they outlive the severity of winter. They have often been found frozen and revived by warmth, nor is it possible that the multitude, which incessantly filled our ears with its discordant notes, could have been matured in two or three days.

The fishermen at Beaver Lake, and the other detached parties, were ordered to return to the post. The expedients to which the poor people were reduced, to cross a country so beset with waters, presented many uncouth spectacles. The inexperienced were glad to compromise, with the loss of property, for the safety of their persons, and astride upon ill-balanced rafts, with which they struggled to be uppermost, exhibited a ludicrous picture of distress. Happy were they who could patch up an old canoe, though obliged to bear it half the way on their shoulders, through miry bogs and interwoven willows. But the veteran trader, wedged in a box of skin, with his wife, children, dogs, and furs,

wheeled triumphantly through the current, and deposited his heterogeneous cargo safely on the shore. The woods re-echoed with the return of their exiled tenants. An hundred tribes, as gaily dressed as any burnished natives of the south, greeted our eyes in our accustomed walks, and their voices, though unmusical, were the sweetest that ever saluted our ears.

From the 19th to the 26th the snow once more blighted the resuscitating verdure, but a single day was sufficient to remove it. On the 28th the Saskatchewan swept away the ice which had adhered to its banks, and on the morrow a boat came down from Carlton House with provisions. We received such accounts of the state of vegetation at that place, that Dr. Richardson determined to visit it, in order to collect botanical specimens, as the period at which the ice was expected to admit of the continuation of our journey was still distant. Accordingly he embarked on the 1st of May.

In the course of the month the ice gra-

dually wore away from the south side of the lake, but the great mass of it still hung to the north side with some snow visible on its surface. By the 21st the elevated grounds were perfectly dry, and teeming with the fragrant offspring of the season. When the snow melted, the earth was covered with the fallen leaves of the last year, and already it was green with the strawberry plant, and the bursting buds of the gooseberry, raspberry, and rose bushes, soon variegated by the rose and the blossoms of the choke cherry. The gifts of nature are disregarded and undervalued till they are withdrawn, and in the hideous regions of the Arctic Zone, she would make a convert of him for whom the gardens of Europe had no charms, or the mild beauties of a southern climate had bloomed in vain.

Mr. Williams found a delightful occupation in his agricultural pursuits. The horses were brought to the plough, and fields of wheat, barley, and Indian corn, promised to reward his labours. His dairy furnished us with all the luxuries of an English farm.

On the 25th the ice departed from Pine Island Lake. We were, however, informed that Beaver Lake, which was likewise in our route, would not afford a passage before the 4th of June. According to directions left by Mr. Franklin, applications were made to the chiefs of the Hudson's Bay and North-West Companies' Posts, for two canoes, with their crews and a supply of stores, for the use of the expedition. They were not in a condition to comply with this request till the arrival of their respective returns from Isle à la Crosse and the Saskatchewan Departments. Of the six men whom we brought from England, the most serviceable, John Hepburn, had accompanied Mr. Franklin, and only one other desired to prosecute the journey with us. Mr. Franklin had made arrangements with Mr. Williams for the employment of the remaining five men in bringing to Cumberland House the ammunition, tobacco, &c. left at York Fort, which stores were, if possible, to be sent after us in the summer. On the 30th Dr. Richardson returned from

Carlton House, and on the 31st the boats arrived belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company's Saskatchewan Department. We obtained a canoe and two more volunteers. On the 1st of June the Saskatchewan, swelled by the melting of the snow near the Rocky Mountains, rose twelve feet, and the current of the little rivers bounding Pine Island ran back into the lake, which it filled with mud.

On the 5th the North-West Company's people arrived, and Mr. Conolly furnished us with a canoe and five Canadians. They were engaged to attend us till Mr. Franklin should think fit to discharge them, and bound under the usual penalties in case of disobedience, or other improper conduct. These poor people entertained such dread of a ship of war, that they stipulated not to be embarked in Lieutenant Parry's vessels, if we should find them on the coast; a condition with which they would gladly have dispensed, had that desirable event taken place. As we required a Canadian foreman and steersman for the other canoe,



we were compelled to wait for the appearance of the *Isle à la Crosse* canoes under Mr. Clark.

On the 8th Mr. Williams embarked for York Fort. He gave us a circular letter addressed to the chiefs of the Hudson's Bay Company's Posts, directing them to afford us all possible assistance on our route, and he promised to exert every endeavour to forward the Esquimaux interpreter, upon whom the success of our journey so much depended. He was accompanied by eight boats. With him we sent our collections of plants, minerals, charts, and drawings, to be transmitted to England by the Hudson's Bay ships. After this period, our detention, though short, cost us more vexation than the whole time we had passed at Cumberland House, because every hour of the short summer was invaluable to us. On the 11th Mr. Clark arrived, and completed our crews.—He brought letters from Mr. Franklin, dated March 28th, at Fort Chipewyan, where he was engaged procuring hunters and inter-

preters. A heavy storm of wind and rain from the north-east again delayed us till the morning of the 13th. The account we had received at York Factory of the numerous stores at Cumberland House proved to be very erroneous. The most material stores we received did not amount, in addition to our own, to more than two barrels of powder, a keg of spirits, and two pieces of tobacco, with pemmican for sixteen days.

The crew of Dr. Richardson's canoe consisted of three Englishmen and three Canadians, and the other carried five Canadians; both were deeply laden, and the waves ran high on the lake. No person in our party being well acquainted with the rivers to the northward, Mr. Conolly gave us a pilot, on condition that we should exchange him when we met with the Athabasca brigade of canoes. At four A.M. we embarked.

We soon found that birchen-bark canoes were not calculated to brave rough weather on a large lake, for we were compelled to land on the opposite border, to free them from the water which had already saturated

their cargoes. The wind became more moderate, and we were enabled, after traversing a chain of smaller lakes, to enter the mouth of the Sturgeon River at sunset, where we encamped.

The lading of the canoes is always, if possible, carried on shore at night, and the canoes taken out of the water. The following evening we reached Beaver Lake, and landed to repair some damages sustained by the canoes. A round stone will displace the lading of a canoe without doing any injury, but a slight blow against a sharp corner penetrates the bark. For the purpose of repairing it, a small quantity of gum or pitch, bark and pine roots, are embarked, and the business is so expeditiously performed, that the speed of the canoe amply compensates for every delay. The Sturgeon River is justly called by the Canadians *La Riviere Maligne*, from its numerous and dangerous rapids. Against the strength of a rapid it is impossible to effect any progress by paddling, and the canoes are tracked, or if the bank will not admit of it, propelled

with poles, in the management of which the Canadians show great dexterity. Their simultaneous motions were strongly contrasted with the awkward confusion of the inexperienced Englishmen, deafened by the torrent, who sustained the blame of every accident which occurred.

At sunset we encamped on an island in Beaver Lake, and at four A.M. the next morning passed the first portage in the Ridge River. Beaver Lake is twelve miles in length, and six in breadth. The flat limestone country rises into bold rocks on its banks, and at the mouth of the Ridge River the limestone discontinues. The lake is very deep, and has already been noticed for the number and excellence of its fish. The Ridge River is rapid and shallow. We had emerged from the muddy channels through an alluvial soil, and the primitive rocks interrupted our way with frequent portages through the whole route to Isle à la Crosse Lake. At two P.M. we passed the mouth of the Hay River, running from the westward; and the ridge above its con-

fluence takes the name of the Great River, which rises at the height of land called the Frog Portage.

The thermometer was this day  $100^{\circ}$  in the sun, and the heat was extremely oppressive, from our constant exposure to it. We crossed three portages in the Great River, and encamped at the last; here we met the director of the North-West Company's affairs in the north, Mr. Stuart, on his way to Fort William, in a light canoe. He had left the Athabasca Lake only thirteen days, and brought letters from Mr. Franklin, who desired that we would endeavour to collect stores of every kind at Isle à la Crosse, and added a favourable account of the country to the northward of the Slave Lake.

On the 16th, at three A.M., we continued our course, the river increasing to the breadth of half a mile, with many rapids between the rocky islands. The banks were luxuriantly clothed with pines, poplars, and birch trees, of the largest size; but the different shades of green were undistin-



guishable at a distance, and the glow of autumnal colours was wanting to render the variety beautiful.

Having crossed two portages at the different extremities of the Island Lake, we ran under sail through two extensive sheets of water, called the Heron and Pelican Lakes ; the former of which is fifteen miles in length, and the latter five ; but its extent to the southward has not been explored. An intricate channel, with four small portages, conducted us to the Woody Lake. Its borders were, indeed, walls of pines, hiding the face of steep and high rocks ; and we wandered in search of a landing-place till ten P.M., when we were forced to take shelter from an impending storm on a small island, where we wedged ourselves between the trees. But though we secured the canoes, we incurred a personal evil of much greater magnitude in the torments inflicted by the mosquitoes, a plague which had grown upon us since our departure from Cumberland House, and which infested us during the whole summer ; we

found no relief from their attacks by exposing ourselves to the utmost violence of the wind and rain. Our last resource was to plunge ourselves in the water, and from this uncomfortable situation we gladly escaped at day-light, and hoisted our sails.

The Woody Lake is thirteen miles in length, and a small grassy channel at its north-western extremity leads to the Frog Portage, the source of the waters descending by Beaver Lake to the Saskatchewan. The distance to the Missinippi, or Churchill River, is only three hundred and eighty yards; and, as its course crosses the height nearly at right angles to the direction of the Great River, it would be superfluous to compute the elevation at this place. The portage is in latitude  $55^{\circ} 26' 0''$  N., and longitude  $103^{\circ} 34' 50''$  W. Its name, according to Sir Alexander Mackenzie, is derived from the Crees having left suspended a stretched frog's skin, in derision of the Northern Indian mode of dressing the beaver.

The part of the Missinippi, in which we

embarked, we should have mistaken for a lake, had it not been for the rapidity of the current against which we made our way. At four P.M. we passed a long portage occasioned by a ledge of rocks, three hundred yards in length, over which the river falls seven or eight feet. After crossing another portage we encamped.

On the 18th we had rain, wind, and thunder, the whole day; but this weather was much preferable to the heat we had borne hitherto. We passed three portages, and at six P.M. encamped on the north bank. Below the third portage is the mouth of the Rapid River, flowing from a large lake to the southward, on which a post was formerly maintained by the North-West Company. Next morning we found ourselves involved in a confused mass of islands, through the openings of which we could not discern the shore. The guide's knowledge of the river did not extend beyond the last portage, and our perplexity continued till we observed some foam floating on the water, and took the direction

from which it came. The noise of a heavy fall at the Mountain Portage reached our ears at the distance of four miles, and we arrived there at eight A.M. The portage was a difficult ascent over a rocky island, between which and the main shore were two cataracts, and a third in sight above them, making another portage. We surprised a large brown bear, which immediately retreated into the woods. To the northward of the second portage we again found the channels intricate, but the shores being sometimes visible, we ventured to proceed. The character of the country was new, and more interesting than before. The mountainous and strong elevations receded from the banks, and the woods crept through their openings to the valleys behind; the adventurous pine alone ascending their bases, and braving storms unfelt below.

At noon we landed at the Otter Portage, where the river ran with great velocity for half a mile, among large stones. Having carried across the principal part of the

cargo, the people attempted to track the canoes along the edge of the rapid. With the first they succeeded, but the other, in which were the foreman and steersman, was upset and swept away by the current. An account of this misfortune was speedily conveyed to the upper end of the portage, and the men launched the remaining canoe into the rapid, though wholly unacquainted with the dangers of it. The descent was quickly accomplished, and they perceived the bottom of the lost canoe above water in a little bay, whither it had been whirled by the eddy. One man had reached the bank, but no traces could be found of the foreman, Louis Saint Jean. We saved the canoe, out of which two guns and a case of preserved meats had been thrown into the rapid.\* So early a disaster deeply affected the spirits of the Canadians, and their natural vivacity gave way to melancholy

\* Mr. Hood himself was the first to leap into the canoe and incite the men to follow him, and shoot the rapid to save the lives of their companions.—DR. RICHARDSON'S *Journal*.



forebodings, while they erected a wooden cross in the rocks near the spot where their companion perished.

The loss of this man's services, and the necessity of procuring a guide, determined us to wait for the arrival of the North-West Company's people from Fort Chipewyan, and we encamped accordingly. The canoe was much shattered, but as the gunwales were not broken, we easily repaired it. In the evening a north-west canoe arrived, with two of the partners. They gave us an account of Mr. Franklin's proceedings, and referred us to the brigade following them for a guide.

During the 20th it rained heavily, and we passed the day in anxious suspense confined to our tents. A black bear came to the bank on the opposite side of the river, and on seeing us glided behind the trees.

Late on the 21st Mr. Robertson, of the Hudson's Bay Company, arrived, and furnished us with a guide, but desired that he might be exchanged when we met the northern canoes. We took advantage of

the remainder of the day to cross the next portage, which was three-fourths of a mile in length.

On the 22d we crossed three small portages, and encamped at the fourth. At one of them we passed some of the Hudson's Bay Company's canoes, and our application to them was unsuccessful. We began to suspect that Isle à la Crosse was the nearest place at which we might hope for assistance. However, on the morning of the 23d, as we were about to embark, we encountered the last brigades of canoes belonging to both the Companies, and obtained a guide and foreman from them. Thus completely equipped, we entered the Black Bear Island Lake, the navigation of which requires a very experienced pilot. Its length is twenty-two miles, and its breadth varies from three to five, yet it is so choked with islands, that no channel is to be found through it exceeding a mile in length. At sunset we landed, and encamped on an island, and at six A.M. on the 24th left the lake, and crossed three portages into another, which

has, probably, several communications with the last, as that by which we passed is too narrow to convey the whole body of the Missinippi. At one of these portages called the Pin Portage is a rapid, about ten yards in length, with a descent of ten or twelve feet, and beset with rocks. Light canoes sometimes venture down this fatal gulf, to avoid the portage, unappalled by the warning crosses which overhang the brink, the mournful records of former failures.

The Hudson's Bay Company's people whom we passed on the 23d, going to the rock house with their furs, were badly provided with food, of which we saw distressing proofs at every portage behind them. They had stripped the birch trees of their rind to procure the soft pulpy vessels in contact with the wood, which are sweet, but very insufficient to satisfy a craving appetite.

The lake to the westward of the Pin Portage, is called Sandfly Lake; it is seven miles long; and a wide channel connects it with the Serpent Lake, the extent of which

to the southward we could not discern. There is nothing remarkable in this chain of lakes, except their shapes, being rocky basins filled by the waters of the Missinippi, insulating the massy eminences, and meandering with almost imperceptible current between them. From the Serpent to the Sandy Lake, it is again confined in a narrow space by the approach of its winding banks, and on the 26th we were some hours employed in traversing a series of shallow rapids, where it was necessary to lighten the canoes. Having missed the path through the woods, we walked two miles in the water upon sharp stones, from which some of us were incessantly slipping into deep holes, and floundering in vain for footing at the bottom; a scene highly diverting, notwithstanding our fatigue. We were detained in Sandy Lake, till one P.M., by a strong gale, when the wind becoming moderate we crossed five miles to the mouth of the river, and at four P.M. left the main branch of it, and entered a little rivulet called the Grassy River, running through

an extensive reedy swamp. It is the nest of innumerable ducks, which rear their young, among the long rushes, in security from beasts of prey. At sunset we encamped on the banks of the main branch.

At three A.M., June 28th, we embarked in a thick fog occasioned by a fall of the temperature of the air ten degrees below that of the water. Having crossed Knee Lake, which is nine miles in length, and a portage at its western extremity, we entered Primeau Lake, with a strong and favourable wind, by the aid of which we ran nineteen miles through it, and encamped at the river's mouth. It is shaped like the barb of an arrow, with the point towards the north, and its greatest breadth is about four miles.

During the night, a torrent of rain washed us from our beds, accompanied with the loudest thunder I ever heard. This weather continued during the 29th, and often compelled us to land, and turn the canoes up, to prevent them from filling. We passed one portage, and the confluence



of a river, said to afford, by other rivers beyond a height of land, a shorter but more difficult route to the Athabasca Lake than that which is generally pursued.

On the 28th we crossed the last portage, and at ten A.M. entered the Isle à la Crosse Lake. Its long succession of woody points, both banks stretching towards the south, till their forms were lost in the haze of the horizon, was a grateful prospect to us, after our bewildered and interrupted voyage in the Missinippi. The gale wafted us with unusual speed, and as the lake increased in breadth, the waves swelled to a dangerous height. A canoe running before the wind is very liable to burst asunder, when on the top of the wave, so that part of the bottom is out of the water ; for there is nothing to support the weight of its heavy cargo but the bark, and the slight gunwales attached to it.

On making known our exigencies to the gentlemen in charge of the Hudson's Bay and North-West Companies' Forts, they made up an assortment of stores, amounting

to five bales; for four of which we were indebted to Mr. Mac Leod of the North-West Company who shared with us the ammunition absolutely required for the support of his post; receiving in exchange an order for the same quantity upon the cargo which we expected to follow us from York Factory. We had heard from Mr. Stuart that Fort Chipewyan was too much impoverished to supply the wants of the expedition, and we found Isle à la Crosse in the same condition; which, indeed, we might have foreseen, from the exhausted state of Cumberland House, but could not have provided against. We never had heard before our departure from York, that the posts in the interior only received annually the stores necessary for the consumption of a single year. It was fortunate for us that Mr. Franklin had desired ten bags of pemmican to be sent from the Saskatchewan across the plains to Isle à la Crosse for our use. This resource was untouched, but we could not embark more than five pieces in our own canoes. However, Mr. Mac Leod agreed

to send a canoe after us to the Methye Portage, with the pemmican, and we calculated that the diminution of our provision would there enable us to receive it.

The Beaver River enters this lake on the S.E. side, and another river which has not been named, on the S.W. Both these rivers are branches of the Missinippi, as it is the only outlet from the lake. The banks appeared to be rocky, and the beach in many places sandy, but its waters are yellow and muddy. It produces a variety of fish, among which its white-fish are esteemed the best in the country. The only birds visible at this season, are common to every part of the Missinippi; gulls, ducks, pigeons, goatsuckers, and the raven; and geese and swans pay a momentary visit in passing to the north and returning.

There was little in the forts differing from the establishments that we had before seen. The ground on which they are erected is sandy, and favourable to cultivation. Curiosity, however, was satisfied by the first experiment, and utility alone has

been unable to extend it. Isle à la Crosse is frequented by the Crees and Chipewyans. It is not the dread of the Indians, but of one another, that has brought the rival Companies so close together at every trading post; each party seeking to prevent the other from engaging the affections of the natives, and monopolizing the trade. Whenever a settlement is made by the one, the other immediately follows, without considering the eligibility of the place; for it may injure its opponent, though it cannot benefit itself, and that advantage which is the first object of all other commercial bodies, becomes but the second with the fur traders.

On the evening of the 30th we embarked, and entered a wide channel to the northward of the forts, and extending towards the north-west. It gradually decreased in breadth till it became a river, which is the third fork of the Missinippi, and its current being almost insensible, we entered the Clear Lake at ten A.M. on the 1st of July. Of this lake, which is very large, no part is

known except the south border, but its extent would lead us to conclude, that its evaporation must be supplied by another river to the northward, especially as the small channel that communicates with Buffalo Lake is motionless. The existence of such a river is asserted by the Indians, and a shorter passage might be found by it across the height of land to Clear Water River, than the portage from the Methye Lake.

In Buffalo Lake, the wind was too strong for us to proceed, and we therefore encamped upon a gravel beach thrown up by the waves. We embarked at three A.M. July 2d, and at four P.M. entered the mouth of the Methye River. The lake is thirty-four miles in length, and fourteen in breadth. It is probably very deep, for we saw no islands on this wide expanse, except the borders. On the south-west side were two forts, belonging to the Companies, and near them a solitary hill, seven or eight hundred feet high. At eight P.M. we encamped in the Methye River, at the conflu-



ence of the river Pembina. A route has been explored by it to the Red Willow River, across the height of land, but the difficulties of it were so great, that the ordinary route is preferred.

On the 3d we passed through the Methye River, and encamped on the borders of the Methye Lake. The soil from Isle à la Crosse to this place is sandy, with some portion of clay, and the trees numerous; but the Methye River is stony, and so shallow, that to lighten the canoes, we made two portages of five and two miles. The paths were overflowed with cold spring water, and barricadoed by fallen trees; we should have been contented to immerse ourselves wholly had the puddle been sufficiently deep, for the mosquitoes devoured every part that was exposed to them.

On the 4th we crossed the Methye Lake, and landed at the portage on the north-west side, in one of the sources of the Missinippi. The lake is seventeen miles in length, with a large island in the middle. We proceeded to the north side of the portage with two

men carrying a tent and some instruments, leaving the canoes and cargoes to be transported by daily journeys of two or three miles. The distance is fourteen statute miles, and there are two small lakes about five miles from the north side. Several species of fish were found in them, though they have no known communication with any other body of water, being situated on the elevation of the height. The road was a gentle ascent, miry from the late rainy weather, and shaded by pines, poplars, birches, and cypresses, which terminated our view. On the north side we discovered through an opening in the trees, that we were on a hill eight or nine hundred feet high, and at the edge of a steep descent. We were prepared to expect an extensive prospect, but the magnificent scene before us was so superior to what the nature of the country had promised, that it banished even our sense of suffering from the mosquitoes, which hovered in clouds about our heads. Two parallel chains of hills extended towards the setting sun, their va-

rious projecting outlines exhibiting the several gradations of distance, and the opposite bases closing at the horizon. On the nearest eminence, the objects were clearly defined by their dark shadows; the yellow rays blended their softening hues with brilliant green on the next, and beyond it all distinction melted into gray and purple. In the long valley between, the smooth and colourless Clear Water River wound its spiral course, broken and shattered by encroaching woods. An exuberance of rich herbage covered the soil, and lofty trees climbed the precipice at our feet, hiding its brink with their summits. Impatient as we were, and blinded with pain, we paid a tribute of admiration, which this beautiful landscape is capable of exciting, unaided by the borrowed charms of a calm atmosphere, glowing with the vivid tints of evening.

We descended to the banks of the Clear Water River, and having encamped, the two men returned to assist their companions. We had sometimes before procured

a little rest, by closing the tent and burning wood or flashing gunpowder within, the smoke driving the mosquitoes into the crannies of the ground; but this remedy was now ineffectual, though we employed it so perseveringly, as to hazard suffocation: they swarmed under our blankets, goring us with their envenomed trunks, and steeping our clothes in blood. We rose at daylight in a fever, and our misery was unmitigated during our whole stay.

The mosquitoes of America resemble, in shape, those of Africa and Europe, but differ essentially in size and other particulars. There are two distinct species, the largest of which is brown, and the smallest black. Where they are bred cannot easily be determined, for they are numerous in every soil. They make their first appearance in May, and the cold destroys them in September; in July they are most voracious; and fortunately for the traders, the journeys from the trading posts to the factories are generally concluded at that period. The food of the mosquito is blood, which it

can extract by penetrating the hide of a buffalo; and if it is not disturbed, it gorges itself so as to swell its body into a transparent globe. The wound does not swell, like that of the African musquito, but it is infinitely more painful; and when multiplied an hundred-fold, and continued for so many successive days, it becomes an evil of such magnitude, that cold, famine, and every other concomitant of an inhospitable climate, must yield the pre-eminence to it. It chases the buffalo to the plains, irritating him to madness; and the rein-deer to the sea-shore, from which they do not return till the scourge has ceased.

On the 6th the thermometer was  $106^{\circ}$  in the sun, and on the 7th  $110^{\circ}$ . The musquitoes sought the shade in the heat of the day. It was some satisfaction to us to see the havoc made among them by a large and beautiful species of dragon-fly, called the musquito hawk, which wheeled through their retreats, swallowing its prey without a momentary diminution of its speed. But the temporary relief that we had hoped for



was only an exchange of tormentors: our new assailant, the horse-fly, or bull-dog, ranged in the hottest glare of the sun, and carried off a portion of flesh at each attack. Another noxious insect, the smallest, but not the least formidable, was the sand-fly, known in Canada by the name of the *brulot*. To such annoyance all travellers must submit, and it would be unworthy to complain of that grievance in the pursuit of knowledge, which is endured for the sake of profit. This detail of it has only been as an excuse for the scantiness of our observations on the most interesting part of the country through which we passed.

The north side of the Methye Portage is in latitude  $56^{\circ} 41' 40''$  N. and longitude  $109^{\circ} 52' 0''$  W. It is, by our course, one hundred and twenty-four miles from Isle à la Crosse, and, considered as a branch of the Missinippi, five hundred and ninety-two miles from the Frog Portage. The Clear Water River, passing through the valley described above, evidently rises not far to the eastward. The height, computed by

the same mode as that of the Echiāmamis, by allowing a foot for each mile of distance, and six feet on an average for each fall and rapid, is two thousand four hundred and sixty seven feet above the level of the sea, admitting it to be nine hundred feet above the Clear Water River. The country, in the line between it and the mouth of Mackenzie's River, is a continual descent, although to the eastward of that line there may be several heights between it and the Arctic Sea. To the eastward, the lands descend to Hudson's Bay; and to the westward also, till the Athabasca River cuts through it, from whence it ascends to the Rocky Mountains. Daring was the spirit of enterprise that first led Commerce, with her cumbrous train, from the waters of Hudson's Bay to those of the Arctic Sea, across an obstacle to navigation so stupendous as this; and persevering has been the industry which drew riches from a source so remote.

On the 8th two men arrived, and informed us, that they had brought us our

ten bags of pemmican, from Isle à la Crosse, but that they were found to be rotten. Thus were we unexpectedly deprived of the most essential of our stores, for we knew Fort Chipewyan to be destitute of provisions, and that Mr. Franklin depended upon us for a supply, whereas enough did not remain for our own use. On the 9th the canoes and cargoes reached the north side of the portage. Our people had selected two bags of pemmican less mouldy than the rest, which they left on the beach. Its decay was caused by some defect in the mode of mixing it.

On the 10th we embarked in the Clear Water River, and proceeded down the current. The hills, the banks, and bed of the river, were composed of fine yellow sand, with some limestone rocks. The surface soil was alluvial. At eight A.M. we passed a portage on which the limestone rocks were singularly scattered through the woods, bearing the appearance of houses and turrets overgrown with moss. The earth emitted a hollow sound, and the river

was divided by rocks into narrow crooked channels, every object indicating that some convulsion had disturbed the general order of nature at this place. We had passed a portage above it, and after two long portages below it we encamped. Near the last was a small stream so strongly impregnated with sulphur, as to taint the air to a great distance around it. We saw two brown bears on the hills in the course of the day.

At daylight on the 11th we embarked. The hills continued on both sides to the mouth of the river, varying from eight hundred to one thousand feet in height. They declined to the banks in long green slopes, diversified by woody mounds and copses. The pines were not here in thick impenetrable masses, but perched aloft in single groups on the heights, or shrouded by the livelier hues of the poplar and willow.

We passed the mouth of the Red Willow River on the south bank, flowing through a deep ravine. It is the continuation of the route by the Pembina, before mentioned. At noon we entered the majestic Athabasca

or Elk River. Its junction with the Clear Water River is called the Forks. Its banks were inaccessible cliffs, apparently of clay and stones, about two hundred feet high, and its windings in the south were encircled by high mountains. Its breadth exceeded half a mile, and was swelled to a mile in many places by long muddy islands in the middle covered with trees. No more portages interrupted our course, but a swift current hurried us towards the quarter in which our anticipated discoveries were to commence. The passing cliffs returned a loud confusion of echoes to the sprightly canoe song and the dashing paddles; and the eagles, watching with half-closed eyes on the pine-tops, started from their airy rest, and prepared their drowsy pinions for the flight.

About twenty miles from the Forks are some salt pits and plains, said to be very extensive. The height of the banks was reduced to twenty or thirty feet, and the hills ranged themselves at an increased distance from the banks in the same variety as



those of the Clear Water River. At sunset we encamped on a small sandy island, but the next morning made a speedy retreat to the canoes, the water having nearly overflowed our encampment. We passed two deserted settlements of the fur traders on opposite banks, at a place called Pierre au Calumet. Beyond it the hills disappeared, and the banks were no longer visible above the trees. The river carries away yearly large portions of soil, which increases its breadth, and diminishes its depth, rendering the water so muddy as to be scarcely drinkable. Whole forests of timber are drifted down the stream, and choke up the channels between the islands at its mouth. We observed the traces of herds of buffaloes, where they had crossed the river, the trees being trodden down and strewed, as if by a whirlwind.

At four P.M. we left the main branch of the Athabasca, entering a small river called the Embarras. It is narrow and muddy, with pines of an enormous size on its banks. Some of them are two hundred feet high,

and three or four feet in diameter. At nine P.M. we landed and encamped; but finding ourselves in a nest of mosquitoes, we continued our journey before daybreak, and at eight A.M. emerged into the Athabasca Lake. A strong wind agitated this sea of fresh water, which, however, we crossed without any accident, and landed on the north side of it, at Fort Chipewyan; where we had the satisfaction of finding our companions in good health, and of experiencing that sympathy in our anxiety on the state of affairs, which was only to be expected from those who were to share our future fortunes.

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## CHAPTER VII.

*Departure from Chipewyan—Difficulties of the various Navigations of the Rivers and Lakes, and of the Portages—Slave Lake and Fort Providence—Scarcity of Provisions, and Discontent of the Canadian Voyagers—Difficulties with regard to the Indian Guides—Refusal to proceed—Visit of Observation to the upper part of Copper-Mine River—Return to the Winter-Quarters of Fort Enterprise.*

EARLY on the morning of the 18th July the stores were distributed to the three canoes. Our stock of provision unfortunately did not amount to more than sufficient for one day's consumption, exclusive of two barrels of flour, three cases of preserved meats, some chocolate, arrow-root, and portable soup, which we had brought from England, and intended to reserve for our journey to the coast the next season. Seventy pounds of moose meat and a little barley were all

that Mr. Smith was enabled to give us. It was gratifying, however, to perceive that this scarcity of food did not depress the spirits of our Canadian companions, who cheerfully loaded their canoes, and embarked in high glee after they had received the customary dram. At noon we bade farewell to our kind friend Mr. Smith. The crews commenced a lively paddling song on quitting the shore, which was continued until we had lost sight of the houses. We soon reached the western boundary of the lake, and at two entered the Stony River, one of the discharges of the Athabasca Lake into the Slave River, and having a favouring current passed swiftly along. This narrow stream is confined between low swampy banks, which support willows, dwarf birch, and alder. At five we passed its conflux with the Peace River. The Slave River, formed by the union of these streams, is about three quarters of a mile wide. We descended this magnificent river with much rapidity, and after passing through several narrow channels, formed

by an assemblage of islands, crossed a spot where the waters had a violent whirling motion, which, when the river is low, is said to subside into a dangerous rapid; on the present occasion no other inconvenience was felt than the inability of steering the canoes, which were whirled about in every direction by the eddies, until the current carried them beyond their influence. We encamped at seven on the swampy bank of the river, but had scarcely pitched the tents before we were visited by a terrible thunder-storm; the rain fell in torrents, and the violence of the wind caused the river to overflow its banks, so that we were completely flooded. Swarms of musquitoes succeeded the storm, and their tormenting stings, superadded to other inconveniences, induced us to embark, and, after taking a hasty supper, to pursue our voyage down the stream during the night.

At six on the following morning we passed the Rein-Deer Islands, and at ten reached the entrance of the Dog River, where we halted to set the fishing nets. These were



examined in the evening, but to our mortification we obtained only four small trout, and were compelled to issue part of our preserved meats for supper. The latitude of the mouth of Dog River was observed  $59^{\circ} 52' 16''$  N.

The nets were taken up at daylight, but they furnished only a solitary pike. We lost no time in embarking, and crossed the crooked channel of the Dog Rapid, when two of the canoes came in such violent contact with each other, that the sternmost had its bow broken off. We were fortunately near the shore, or the disabled canoe would have sunk. The injury being repaired in two hours, we again embarked, and having descended another rapid, arrived at the Cassette Portage of four hundred and sixty paces, over which the cargoes and canoes were carried in about twenty-six minutes. We next passed through a narrow channel full of rapids, crossed the portage d'Embarras of seventy yards, and the portage of the Little Rock, of three hundred yards, at which another accident happened to one

of the canoes, by the bowman slipping and letting it fall upon a rock, and breaking it in two. Two hours were occupied in sewing the detached pieces together, and covering the seam with pitch; but this being done, it was as effective as before. After leaving this place we soon came to the next portage, of two hundred and seventy-three paces; and shortly afterwards to the Mountain Portage, of one hundred and twenty; which is appropriately named, as the path leads over the summit of a high hill. This elevated situation commands a very grand and picturesque view, for some miles along the river, which at this part is about a mile wide.

We next crossed a portage of one hundred and twenty yards; and then the Pelican Portage, of eight hundred paces. Mr. Back took an accurate sketch of the interesting scenery which the river presents at this place. After descending six miles further, we came to the last portage on the route to Slave Lake, which we crossed, and encamped in its lower end. It is called

“ *The Portage of the Drowned*,” and it received that name from a melancholy accident which took place many years ago. Two canoes arrived at the upper end of the portage, in one of which there was an experienced guide. This man, judging from the height of the river, deemed it practicable to shoot the rapid, and determined upon trying it. He accordingly placed himself in the bow of his canoe, having previously agreed, that if the passage was found easy, he should, on reaching the bottom of the rapid, fire a musket, as a signal for the other canoe to follow. The rapid proved dangerous, and called forth all the skill of the guide, and the utmost exertion of his crew, and they narrowly escaped destruction. Just as they were landing, an unfortunate fellow, seizing the loaded fowling-piece, fired at a duck which rose at the instant. The guide, anticipating the consequences, ran with the utmost haste to the other end of the portage, but he was too late; the other canoe had pushed off, and he arrived only to witness the fate of his

comrades. They got alarmed in the middle of the rapid, the canoe was upset, and every man perished.

The various rapids we passed this day are produced by an assemblage of islands and rocky ledges, which obstruct the river, and divide it into many narrow channels. Two of these channels are rendered still more difficult by accumulations of drift timber; a circumstance which has given a name to one of the portages. The rocks which compose the bed of the river, and the numerous islands, belong to the granite formation. The distance made to-day was thirteen miles.

*July 21.*—We embarked at four A.M. and pursued our course down the river. The rocks cease at the last portage; and below it the banks are composed of alluvial soil, which is held together by the roots of trees and shrubs that crown their summits. The river is about a mile wide, and the current is greatly diminished. At eight we landed at the mouth of the Salt River, and pitched our tents, intending to remain there

that and the next day for the purpose of fishing. After breakfast, which made another inroad on our preserved meats, we proceeded up the river in a light canoe, to visit the salt springs, leaving a party behind to attend the nets. This river is about one hundred yards wide at its mouth. Its waters did not become brackish until we had ascended it seven or eight miles; but when we had passed several rivulets of fresh water which flowed in, the main stream became very salt, at the same time contracting its width to fifteen or twenty yards. At a distance of twenty-two miles, including the windings of the river, the plains commence. Having pitched the tent at this spot, we set out to visit the principal springs, and had walked about three miles, when the musquitoes compelled us to give up our project. We did not see the termination of the plains toward the east, but on the north and west they are bounded by an even ridge, about six or seven hundred feet in height. Several salt springs issue from the foot of this ridge, and spread their



waters over the plain, which consists of tenacious clay. During the summer much evaporation takes place, and large heaps of salt are left behind crystallized in the form of cubes. Some beds of grayish compact gypsum were exposed on the sides of the hills.

The next morning, after filling some casks with salt for our use during winter, we embarked to return, and had descended the river a few miles, when, turning round a point, we perceived a buffalo plunge into the river before us. Eager to secure so valuable a prize, we instantly opened a fire upon him from four muskets, and in a few minutes he fell, but not before he had received fourteen balls. The carcass was towed to the bank, and the canoe speedily laden with meat. After this piece of good fortune, we descended the stream merrily, our voyagers chanting their liveliest songs. On arrival at the mouth of the river, we found that our nets had not produced more than enough to supply a scanty meal to the men whom we had left behind, but this was

now of little importance, as the acquisition of meat we had made would enable us to proceed without more delay to Slave Lake. The *poisson inconnu*, mentioned by MacKenzie, is found here. It is a species of the genus *Salmo*, and is said by the Indians to ascend from the Arctic Sea, but being unable to pass the cascade of the Slave River is not found higher than this place. In the evening a violent thunderstorm came on with heavy rain, thermometer  $70^{\circ}$ .

At a very early hour on the following morning we embarked, and continued to paddle against a very strong wind and high waves, under the shelter of the bank of the rivers, until two P.M., when having arrived at a more exposed part of the stream, the canoes took in so much water that we were obliged to disembark on a small island. The river here is from one mile and a quarter to one mile and three quarters wide. Its banks are of moderate height, sandy, and well wooded.

*July 24.*—We made more progress, not-

withstanding the continuance of the wind. The course of the river is very winding, making in one place a circuit of seven or eight miles round a peninsula, which is joined to the west bank by a narrow isthmus. Near the foot of this elbow, a long island occupies the centre of the river, which it divides into two channels. The longitude was obtained near to it  $113^{\circ} 25' 36''$ , and variation  $27^{\circ} 25' 14''$  N., and the latitude  $60^{\circ} 54' 52''$  N., about four miles farther down. We passed the mouth of a broad channel leading to the north-east, termed La Grande Rivière de Jean, one of the two large branches by which the river pours its waters into the Great Slave Lake; the flooded *delta* at the mouth of the river is intersected by several smaller channels, through one of which, called the Channel of the Scaffold, we pursued our voyage on the following morning, and by eight A.M. reached the establishment of the North-West Company on Moose-Deer Island. We found letters from Mr. Wentzel, dated Fort Providence, a station on the north side

of the lake, which communicated to us that there was an Indian guide waiting for us at that post ; but, that the chief and the hunters, who were to accompany the party, had gone to a short distance to hunt, having become impatient at our delay.

Soon after landing, I visited the Hudson's Bay Post on the same island, and engaged Pierre St. Germain, an interpreter for the Copper Indians. We regretted to find the posts of both the Companies extremely bare of provision ; but as the gentlemen in charge had despatched men on the preceding evening to a band of Indians, in search of meat, and they promised to furnish us with whatever should be brought, it was deemed advisable to wait for their return, as the smallest supply was now of importance to us. Advantage was taken of the delay to repair effectually the canoe, which had been broken in the Dog Rapid. On the next evening the men arrived with the meat, and enabled Mr. M'Cleod, of the North-West Company, to furnish us with four hundred pounds of dried provi-

sions. Mr. M'Vicar, of the Hudson's Bay Company, also supplied one hundred and fifty pounds. This quantity we considered would be sufficient, until we could join the hunters. We also obtained three fishing-nets, a gun, and a pair of pistols, which were all the stores these posts could furnish, although the gentlemen in charge were much disposed to assist us.

Moose-Deer Island is about a mile in diameter, and rises towards the centre about three hundred feet above the lake. Its soil is in general sandy, in some parts swampy. The varieties of the northern berries grow abundantly on it. The North-West Company's Fort is in latitude  $61^{\circ} 11' 8''$  N.; longitude  $113^{\circ} 51' 37''$  W., being two hundred and sixty statute miles distant from Fort Chipewyan, by the river course. The variation of the compass is  $25^{\circ} 40' 47''$  E. The houses of the two Companies are small, and have a bleak northern aspect. There are vast accumulations of drift wood on the shores of the lake, brought down by the river, which afford plenty of fuel. The in-



habitants live principally on the fish, which the lake at certain seasons furnishes in great abundance ; of these, the white fish, trout, and *poisson inconnu* are considered the best. They also procure moose, buffalo, and reindeer meat occasionally from their hunters ; but these animals are generally found at the distance of several days' walk from the forts. The Indians who trade here are Chipewyans. Beavers, martens, foxes, and musk-rats, are caught in numbers in the vicinity of this great body of water. The musquitoes here were still a serious annoyance to us, but less numerous than before. They were in some degree replaced by a small sandfly, whose bite is succeeded by a copious flow of blood, and considerable swelling, but is attended with incomparably less irritation, than the puncture of the musquito.

On the 27th of July we embarked at four A.M., and proceeded along the south shore of the lake, through a narrow channel, formed by some islands, beyond the confluence of the principal branch of the Slave

River, and as far as Stony Island, where we breakfasted. This island is merely a rock of gneiss, that rises forty or fifty feet above the lake, and is precipitous on the north side. As the day was fine, and the lake smooth, we ventured upon paddling across to the Rein-Deer Islands, which were distant about thirteen miles in a northern direction, instead of pursuing the usual track by keeping further along the south shore which inclines to the eastward from this point. These islands are numerous, and consist of granite, rising from one hundred to two hundred feet above the water. They are for the most part naked; but towards the centres of the larger ones, there is a little soil, and a few groves of pines. At seven in the evening we landed upon one of them and encamped. On the following morning we ran before a strong breeze and a heavy swell for some hours, but at length were obliged to seek shelter on a large island adjoining to Isle à la Cache of Mackenzie, where the following observations were obtained: latitude  $61^{\circ}$

50' 18" N., longitude 113° 21' 40" W., and variation 31° 2' 06" E.

The wind and swell having subsided in the afternoon, we re-embarked and steered towards the western point of the Big-Island of Mackenzie, and, when four miles distant from it, had forty-two fathoms soundings. Passing between this island and a promontory of the main shore, termed Big Cape, we entered into a deep bay, which receives the waters from several rivers that come from the northward; and we immediately perceived a decrease in the temperature of the waters from 59° to 48°. We coasted along the eastern side of the bay, its western shore being always visible, but the canoes were exposed to the hazard of being broken by the numerous sunken rocks, which were scattered in our track. We encamped for the night on a rocky island, and by eight A.M. on the following morning arrived at Fort Providence, which is situated twenty-one miles from the entrance of the bay. The post is exclusively occupied by the North-West Company, the Hudson's Bay

Company having no settlement to the northward of Great Slave Lake. We found Mr. Wentzel and our interpreter Jean Baptiste Adam here, with one of the Indian guides; but the chief of the tribe and his hunters were encamped with their families, some miles from the fort, in a good situation for fishing. Our arrival was announced to him by a fire on the top of a hill, and before night a messenger came to communicate his intention of seeing us next morning. The customary present, of tobacco and some other articles, was immediately sent to him.

Mr. Wentzel prepared me for the first conference with the Indians by mentioning all the information they had already given to him. The duties allotted to this gentleman were, the management of the Indians, the superintendence of the Canadian voyagers, the obtaining and the general distribution of the provision, and the issue of the other stores. These services he was well qualified to perform, having been accustomed to execute similar duties during

a residence of upwards of twenty years in this country. We also deemed Mr. Wentzel to be a great acquisition to our party, as a check on the interpreters, he being one of the few traders who speak the Chipewyan language.

As we were informed that external appearances made lasting impressions on the Indians, we prepared for the interview by decorating ourselves in uniform, and suspending a medal round each of our necks. Our tents had been previously pitched and over one of them a silken union flag was hoisted. Soon after noon, on July 30th, several Indian canoes were seen advancing in a regular line, and on their approach, the chief was discovered in the headmost, which was paddled by two men. On landing at the fort, the chief assumed a very grave aspect, and walked up to Mr. Wentzel with a measured and dignified step, looking neither to the right nor to the left, at the persons who had assembled on the beach to witness his debarkation, but preserving the same immoveability of countenance until he



reached the hall, and was introduced to the officers. When he had smoked his pipe, drank a small portion of spirits and water himself, and issued a glass to each of his companions, who had seated themselves on the floor, he commenced his harangue, by mentioning the circumstances that led to his agreeing to accompany the Expedition, an engagement which he was quite prepared to fulfil. He was rejoiced, he said, to see such great chiefs on his lands; his tribe was poor, but they loved white men, who had been their benefactors; and he hoped that our visit would be productive of much good to them. The report which preceded our arrival, he said, had caused much grief to him. It was at first rumoured that a great medicine chief accompanied us, who was able to restore the dead to life; at this he rejoiced; the prospect of again seeing his departed relatives had enlivened his spirits, but his first communication with Mr. Wentzel had removed these vain hopes, and he felt as if his friends had a second time been torn from him. He now wished

to be informed exactly of the nature of our expedition.

In reply to this speech, which I understood had been prepared for many days, I endeavoured to explain the objects of our mission in a manner best calculated to ensure his exertions in our service. With this view, I told him that we were sent out by the greatest chief in the world, who was the sovereign also of the trading companies in the country; that he was the friend of peace, and had the interest of every nation at heart. Having learned that his children in the north were much in want of articles of merchandize, in consequence of the extreme length and difficulty of the present route; he had sent us to search for a passage by the sea, which, if found, would enable large vessels to transport great quantities of goods more easily to their lands. That we had not come for the purpose of traffic, but solely to make discoveries for their benefit, as well as that of every other people. That we had been directed to inquire into the nature of all

the productions of the countries we might pass through, and particularly respecting their inhabitants. That we desired the assistance of the Indians in guiding us, and providing us with food; finally, that we were most positively enjoined by the great chief to recommend that hostilities should cease throughout this country; and especially between the Indians and the Esquimaux, whom he considered his children, in common with other natives; and by way of enforcing the latter point more strongly, I assured him that a forfeiture of all the advantages which might be anticipated from the expedition would be a certain consequence if any quarrel arose between his party and the Esquimaux. I also communicated to him that owing to the distance we had travelled, we had now few more stores than was necessary for the use of our own party, a part of these, however, should be forthwith presented to him; on his return, he and his party should be remunerated with cloth, ammunition, tobacco, and some useful iron materials, besides having

their debts to the North-West Company discharged.

The chief, whose name is Akaitcho or Big-foot, replied by a renewal of his assurances, that he and his party would attend us to the end of our journey, and that they would do their utmost to provide us with the means of subsistence. He admitted that his tribe had made war upon the Esquimaux, but said they were now desirous of peace, and unanimous in their opinion as to the necessity of all who accompanied us abstaining from every act of enmity against that nation. He added, however, that the Esquimaux were very treacherous, and therefore recommended that we should advance towards them with caution.

The communications which the chief and the guides then gave respecting the route to the Copper-Mine River and its course to the sea, coincided in every material point with the statements which were made by Boileau and Blackmeat at Chipewyan, but they differed in their descriptions of the coast. The information, however, collected

from both sources was very vague and unsatisfactory. None of his tribe had been more than three days' march along the sea-coast to the eastward of the river's mouth.

As the water was unusually high this season, the Indian guides recommended our going by a shorter route to the Copper-Mine River than that they had first proposed to Mr. Wentzel, and they assigned as a reason for the change, that the reindeer would be sooner found upon this track. They then drew a chart of the proposed route on the floor with charcoal, exhibiting a chain of twenty-five small lakes extending towards the north, about one half of them connected by a river which flows into Slave Lake near Fort Providence. One of the guides, named Keskarrah, drew the Copper-Mine River, running through the Upper Lake, in a westerly direction towards the Great Bear Lake, and then northerly to the sea. The other guide drew the river in a straight line to the sea from the above-mentioned place, but, after some dispute, admitted the correctness of



the first delineation. The latter was elder brother to Akaitcho, and he said that he had accompanied Mr. Hearne on his journey, and though very young at the time, still remembered many of the circumstances, and particularly the massacre committed by the Indians on the Esquimaux.

They pointed out another lake to the southward of the river, about three days' journey distant from it, on which the chief proposed the next winter's establishment should be formed, as the rein-deer would pass there in the autumn and spring. Its waters contained fish, and there was a sufficiency of wood for building as well as for the winter's consumption. These were important considerations, and determined me in pursuing the route they now proposed. They could not inform us what time we should take in reaching the lake, until they saw our manner of travelling in the large canoes, but they supposed we might be about twenty days, in which case I entertained the hope that if we could then procure provision we should have time to descend the Copper-

Mine River for a considerable distance, if not to the sea itself, and return to the lake before the winter set in.

It may here be proper to mention that it had been my original plan to descend the Mackenzie's River and to cross the Great Bear Lake, from the eastern side of which, Boileau informed me, there is a communication with the Copper-Mine River by four small lakes and portages; but under our present circumstances, this course could not be followed, because it would remove us too far from the establishments at the Great Slave Lake to receive the supplies of ammunition and some other stores in the winter, which were absolutely necessary for the prosecution of our journey, or to get the Esquimaux interpreter, whom we expected. If I had not deemed these circumstances paramount I should have preferred the route by Bear Lake.

Akaitcho and the guides having communicated all the information they possessed on the different points to which our questions had been directed, I placed my medal

round the neck of the chief, and the officers presented theirs to an elder brother of his and the two guides, communicating to them that these marks of distinction were given as tokens of our friendship and as pledges of the sincerity of our professions. Being conferred in the presence of all the hunters their acquisition was highly gratifying to them, but they studiously avoided any great expression of joy, because such an exposure would have been unbecoming the dignity which the senior Indians assume during a conference. They assured us, however, of their being duly sensible of these tokens of our regard, and that they should be preserved during their lives with the utmost care. The chief evinced much penetration and intelligence during the whole of this conversation, which gave us a favourable opinion of his intellectual powers. He made many inquiries respecting the Discovery ships, under the command of Captain Parry, which had been mentioned to him, and asked why a passage had not been discovered long ago, if one existed. It may be

stated that we gave a faithful explanation to all his inquiries, which policy would have prompted us to do if a love of truth had not; for whenever these northern nations detect a falsehood in the dealings of the traders, they make it an unceasing subject of reproach, and their confidence is irrecoverably lost.

We presented to the chief, the two guides, and the seven hunters, who had engaged to accompany us, some cloth, blankets, tobacco, knives, daggers, besides other useful iron materials, and a gun to each; also a keg of very weak spirits and water, which they kept until the evening, as they had to try their guns before dark, and make the necessary preparations for commencing the journey on the morrow. They, however, did not leave us so soon, as the chief was desirous of being present with his party at the dance, which was given in the evening to our Canadian voyagers. They were highly entertained by the vivacity and agility displayed by our companions in their singing and dancing, and especially by their

imitating the gestures of a Canadian, who placed himself in the most ludicrous postures ; and, whenever this was done, the gravity of the chief gave way to violent bursts of laughter. In return for the gratification Akaitcho had enjoyed, he desired his young men to exhibit the Dog-Rib Indian dance ; and immediately they ranged themselves in a circle, and, keeping their legs widely separated, began to jump simultaneously sideways ; their bodies were bent, their hands placed on their hips, and they uttered forcibly the interjection *tsa* at each jump. Devoid as were their attitudes of grace, and their music of harmony, we were much amused by the novelty of the exhibition.

In the midst of this scene an untoward accident occurred, which for a time interrupted our amusements. The tent in which Dr. Richardson and I lodged, having caught fire from some embers that had been placed in it to expel the musquitoes, was entirely burnt. Hepburn, who was sleeping within it close to some powder, most providentially



awoke in time to throw it clear of the flame, and rescue the baggage before any material injury had been received. We dreaded the consequences of this disaster upon the fickle minds of the Indians, and wished it not to be communicated to them. The chief, however, was soon informed of it by one of his people, and expressed his desire that no future misfortune should be concealed from him. We found he was most concerned to hear that the flag had been burnt, but we removed his anxiety on that point by the assurance that it could easily be repaired. We were advised by Mr. Wentzel to recommence the dancing after this event, lest the Indians should imagine, by our putting a stop to it, that we considered the circumstance as an unfavourable commencement of our undertaking. We were, however, deeply impressed with a grateful sense of the Divine Providence, in averting the threatened destruction of our stores, which would have been fatal to every prospect of proceeding forward this season.

*August 1.*—This morning the Indians set out, intending to wait for us at the mouth of the Yellow-Knife River. We remained behind to pack our stores in bales of eighty pounds each, an operation which could not be done in the presence of these Indians, as they are in the habit of begging for every thing they see. Our stores consisted of two barrels of gunpowder, one hundred and forty pounds of ball and small shot, four fowling-pieces, a few old trading guns, eight pistols, twenty-four Indian daggers, some packages of knives, chisels, axes, nails, and fastenings for a boat; a few yards of cloth, some blankets, needles, looking-glasses, and beads; together with nine fishing-nets, having meshes of different sizes. Our provision was two casks of flour, two hundred dried rein-deer tongues, some dried moose-meat, portable soup, and arrow-root, sufficient in the whole for ten days' consumption, besides two cases of chocolate and two canisters of tea. We engaged another Canadian voyager at this place, and the expedition then consisted of twenty-eight persons, including

the officers and the wives of three of our voyagers, who were brought for the purpose of making shoes and clothes for the men at the winter establishment ; there were also three children, belonging to two of these women.\*

\* The following is the list of the officers and men who composed the expedition on its departure from Fort Providence :

John Franklin, Lieutenant of the Royal Navy and Commander.

John Richardson, M. D. Surgeon of the Royal Navy.

Mr. George Back, of the Royal Navy, Admiralty Midshipman.

Mr. Robert Hood, of the Royal Navy, Admiralty Midshipman.

Mr. Frederick Wentzel, Clerk to the North-West Company.

John Hepburn, English seaman.

#### CANADIAN VOYAGERS.

Joseph Peltier,	Gabriel Beuparlant,
Matthew Pelonquin, dit	Vincenza Fontano,
Crédit,	Registe Vaillant,
Solomon Belanger,	Jean Baptiste Parent,
Joseph Benoit,	Jean Baptiste Belanger,
Joseph Gagné,	Jean Baptiste Belleau,

Our observations place Fort Providence in latitude  $62^{\circ} 17' 19''$  N., longitude  $114^{\circ} 9' 28''$  W.; the variation of the compass is  $33^{\circ} 35' 55''$  E., and dip of the needle  $86^{\circ} 38' 02''$ . It is distant from Moose-Deer Island sixty-six geographic miles. This is the last establishment of the traders in this direction, but the North-West Company have two to the northward of it on the Mackenzie River. It has been erected for the convenience of the Copper and Dog-Rib Indians, who generally bring such a quantity of rein-deer meat, that the residents are enabled, out of their superabundance, to send annually some provision to the fort at Moose-Deer Island. They also occasionally procure moose and buffalo

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Pierre Dumas,  
Joseph Forcier,  
Ignace Perrault,  
Francois Samandré.

Emanuel Cournoyée,  
Michel Teroahauté, an  
Iroquois.

INTERPRETERS.

Pierre St. Germain,  
Jean Baptiste Adam,

Chipewyan Bois Brulés.

meat, but these animals are not numerous on this side of the lake. Few furs are collected. *Les poissons inconnus*, trout, pike, carp, and white-fish, are very plentiful, and on these the residents principally subsist. Their great supply of fish is procured in the latter part of September and the beginning of October, but there are a few taken daily in the nets during the winter. The surrounding country consists almost entirely of coarse-grained granite, frequently enclosing large masses of reddish felspar. These rocks form hills which attain an elevation of three hundred or four hundred feet, about a mile behind the house; their surface is generally naked, but in the valleys between them grow a few spruce, aspen, and birch trees, together with a variety of shrubs and berry-bearing plants.

On the afternoon of the 2d of August we commenced our journey, having, in addition to our three canoes, a smaller one to convey the women; we were all in high spirits, being heartily glad that the time had at length arrived when our course was to be



directed towards the Copper-Mine River, and through a line of country which had not been previously visited by any European. We proceeded to the northward, along the eastern side of a deep bay of the lake, passing through various channels, formed by an assemblage of rocky islands, and at sunset encamped on a projecting point of the north main shore, eight miles from Fort Providence. To the westward of this arm or bay of the lake, there is another deep bay, that receives the waters of a river which communicates with Great Marten Lake, where the North-West Company had once a post established. The eastern shores of the Great Slave Lake are very imperfectly known; none of the traders have visited them, and the Indians give such loose and unsatisfactory accounts, that no estimation can be formed of its extent in that direction. These men say there is a communication from its eastern extremity by a chain of lakes, with a shallow river, which discharges its waters into the sea. This stream they call the Thlouee-tessy,

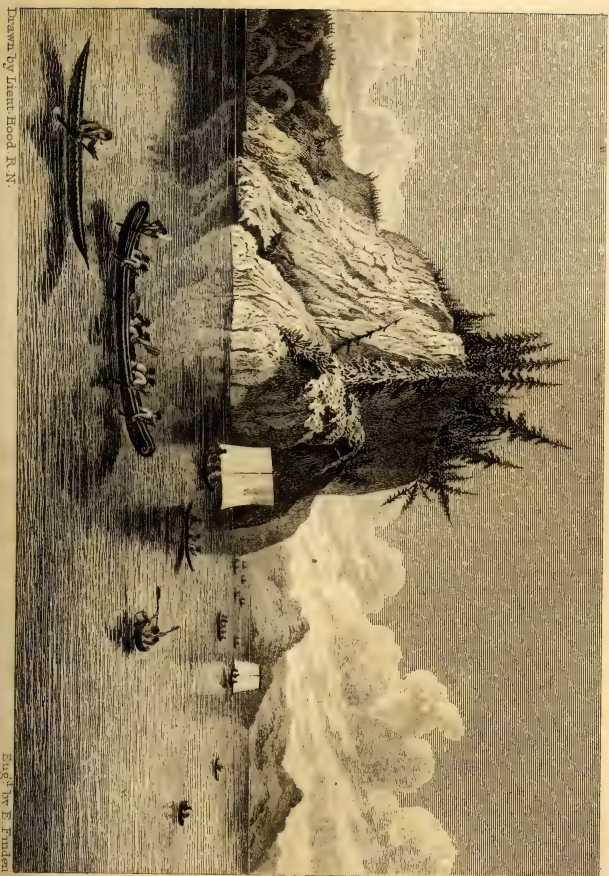
and report it to be navigable for Indian canoes only. The forms of the south and western shores are better known from the survey of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, and in consequence of the canoes having to pass and repass along these borders annually between Moose-Deer Island and Mackenzie's River. Our observations made the breadth of the lake, between Stony Island and the north main shore, sixty miles less than it is laid down in Arrowsmith's map; and there is also a considerable difference in the longitude of the eastern side of the bay, which we entered.

This lake, owing to its great depth, is seldom completely frozen over before the last week in November, and the ice, which is generally seven feet thick, breaks up about the middle of June, three weeks later than that of the Slave River. The only known outlet to this vast body of water, which receives so many streams on its north and south shores, is the Mackenzie's River.

*August 3.*—We embarked at three A.M.

and proceeded to the entrance of the Yellow-Knife River of the traders, which is called by the natives Beg-ho-lo-dessy; or, River of the Toothless Fish. We found Akaitcho, and the hunters with their families, encamped here. There were also several other Indians of his tribe, who intended to accompany us some distance into the interior. This party was quickly in motion after our arrival, and we were soon surrounded by a fleet of seventeen Indian canoes. In company with them we paddled up the river, which is one hundred and fifty yards wide, and in an hour came to a cascade of five feet, where we were compelled to make a portage of one hundred and fifty-eight yards. We next crossed a dilatation of the river, about six miles in length, upon which the name of Lake Prosperous was bestowed. Its shores, though scantily supplied with wood, are very picturesque.

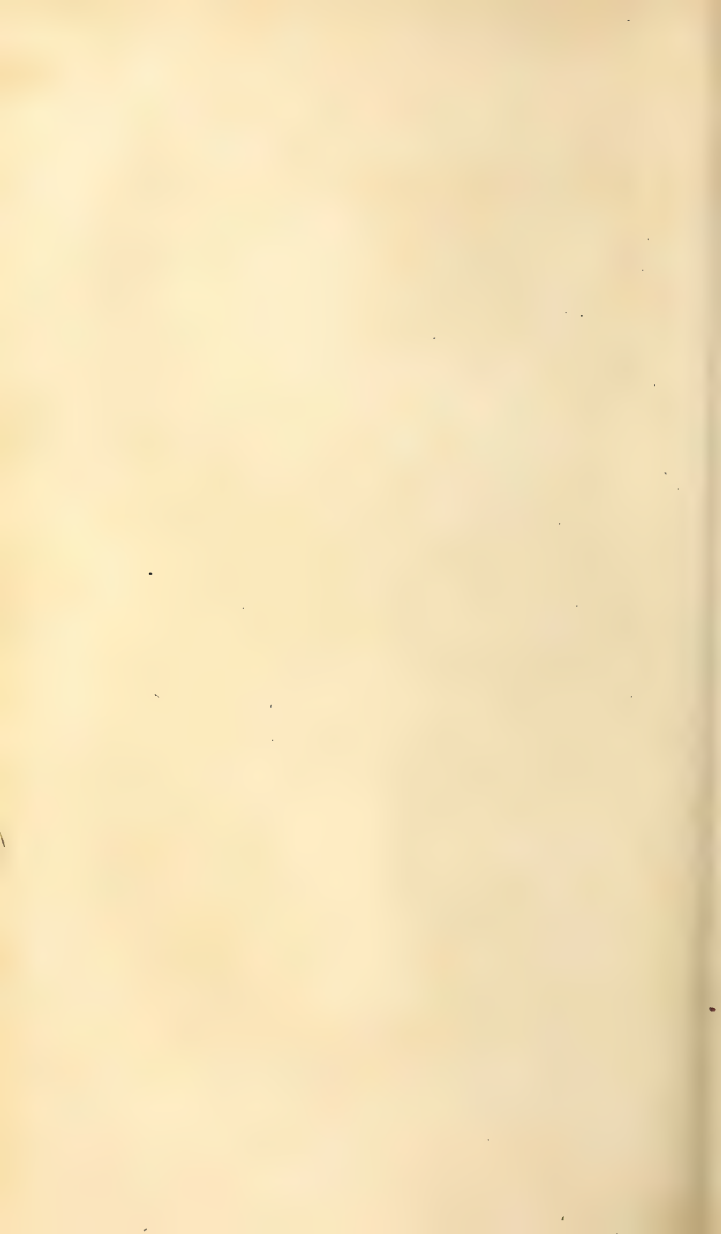
Akaitcho caused himself to be paddled by his slave, a young man of the Dog-Rib nation, whom he had taken by force from



Drawn by Lieut. Hood, R. N.

EXPEDITION CROSSING LAKE PROSPERITY.

Engr'd by E. Finden





his friends; when he thought himself, however, out of reach of our observation, he laid aside a good deal of his state, and assisted in the labour; and, after a few days further acquaintance with us, he did not hesitate to paddle in our presence, or even carry his canoe on the portages. Several of the canoes were managed by women, who proved to be noisy companions, for they quarrelled frequently, and the weakest was generally profuse in her lamentations, which were not at all diminished when the husband attempted to settle the difference by a few blows with his paddle.

An observation, near the centre of the lake, gave  $114^{\circ} 13' 39''$  W., and  $33^{\circ} 8' 06''$  E., variation.

Leaving the lake, we ascended a very strong rapid, and arrived at a range of three steep cascades, situated in the bend of the river. Here we made a portage of one thousand three hundred yards over a rocky hill, which received the name of the Bow-string Portage, from its shape. We found

that the Indians had greatly the advantage of us in this operation; the men carried their small canoes, the women and children the clothes and provisions, and at the end of the portage they were ready to embark; whilst it was necessary for our people to return four times, before they could transport the weighty cargo with which we were burdened. After passing through another expansion of the river, and over the Steep Portage of one hundred and fifteen yards, we encamped on a small rocky isle, just large enough to hold our party, and the Indians took possession of an adjoining rock. We were now thirty miles from Fort Providence.

As soon as the tents were pitched, the officers and men were divided into watches for the night; a precaution intended to be taken throughout the journey, not merely to prevent our being surprised by strangers, but also to show our companions that we were constantly on our guard. The chief, who suffered nothing to escape his observation, remarked, "that he should sleep with-

out anxiety among the Esquimaux, for he perceived no enemy could surprise us."

After supper we retired to rest, but our sleep was soon interrupted by the Indians joining in loud lamentations over a sick child, whom they supposed to be dying. Dr. Richardson, however, immediately went to the boy, and administered some medicine which relieved his pain, and put a stop to their mourning. The temperatures this day were at four A.M.  $54^{\circ}$ , three P.M.  $72^{\circ}$ , at seven P.M.  $65^{\circ}$ .

On the 4th we crossed a small lake, and passed in succession over the Blue Berry Cascade, and Double Fall Portages, where the river falls over ridges of rocks that completely obstruct the passage for canoes. We came to three strong rapids beyond these barriers, which were surmounted by the aid of the poles and lines, and then to a bend of the river in which the cascades were so frequent, that to avoid them we carried the canoes into a chain of small lakes. We entered them by a portage of nine hundred and fifty paces, and during

the afternoon traversed three other grassy lakes, and encamped on the banks of the river at the end of the Yellow-Knife Portage, of three hundred and fifty paces. This day's work was very laborious to our men. Akaitcho, however, had directed his party to assist them in carrying their burdens on the portages, which they did cheerfully. This morning Mr. Back caught several fish with a fly, a method of fishing entirely new to the Indians; and they were not more delighted than astonished at his skill and success. The extremes of temperature to-day were  $54^{\circ}$  and  $65^{\circ}$ .

On August 5th we continued the ascent of the river, which varied much in breadth, as did the current in rapidity. It flows between high rocky banks, on which there is sufficient soil to support pines, birch, and poplars. Five portages were crossed, then the Rocky Lake, and we finished our labours at the end of the sixth portage. The issue of dried meat for breakfast this morning had exhausted all our stock; and no other provision remained but the portable soups,

and a few pounds of preserved meat. At the recommendation of Akaitcho, the hunters were furnished with ammunition, and desired to go forward as speedily as possible to the part where the rein-deer were expected to be found; and to return to us with any provision they could procure. He also assured us, that in our advance towards them we should come to lakes abounding in fish. Many of the Indians being likewise in distress for food, decided on separating from us, and going on at a quicker pace than we could travel.

Akaitcho himself was always furnished with a portion at our meals, as a token of regard which the traders have taught the chiefs to expect, and which we willingly paid.

The next morning we crossed a small lake and a portage before we entered the river; shortly afterwards, the canoes and cargoes were carried a mile along its banks, to avoid three very strong rapids, and over another portage into a narrow lake; we encamped on an island in the middle of it



to set the nets; but they only yielded a few fish, and we had a very scanty supper, as it was necessary to deal out our provision sparingly. The longitude,  $114^{\circ} 27' 03''$  W., and variation,  $33^{\circ} 04''$  E., were observed.

We had the mortification of finding the nets entirely empty next morning, an untoward circumstance that discouraged our voyagers very much; and they complained of being unable to support the fatigue to which they were daily exposed, on their present scanty fare. We had seen with regret that the portages were more frequent as we advanced to the northward, and feared that their strength would fail, if provision were not soon obtained. We embarked at six, proceeded to the head of the lake, and crossed a portage of two thousand five hundred paces, leading over ridges of sand-hills, which nourished pines of a larger size than we had lately seen. This conducted us to Mossy Lake, whence we regained the river, after traversing another portage. The Birch and Poplar Portages next followed, and beyond these we came

to a part where the river takes a great circuit, and its course is interrupted by several heavy falls. The guide, therefore, advised us to quit it, and proceed through a chain of nine lakes extending to the northeast, which we did, and encamped on Icy Portage, where the nets were set. The bottom of the valley, through which the track across this portage led, was covered with ice four or five feet thick, the remains of a large iceberg, which is annually formed there, by the snow drifting into the valley, and becoming consolidated into ice by the overflowing of some springs that are warm enough to resist the winter's cold. The latitude is  $63^{\circ} 22' 15''$  N., longitude  $114^{\circ} 15' 30''$  W.

We were alarmed in the night by our fire communicating to the dry moss, which, spreading by the force of a strong wind, encircled the encampment and threatened destruction to our canoes and baggage. The watch immediately aroused all the men, who quickly removed whatever could

be injured to a distant part, and afterwards succeeded in extinguishing the flame.

*August 8.*—During this day we crossed five portages, passing over a very bad road. The men were quite exhausted with fatigue by five P.M., when we were obliged to encamp on the borders of the fifth lake, in which the fishing nets were set. We began this evening to issue some portable soup and arrow-root, which our companions relished very much; but this food is too unsubstantial to support their vigour under their daily exhausting labour, and we could not furnish them with a sufficient quantity even of this to satisfy their desires. We commenced our labours on the next day in a very wet uncomfortable state, as it had rained through the night until four A.M. The fifth grassy lake was crossed, and four others, with their intervening portages, and we returned to the river by a portage of one thousand four hundred and fifteen paces. The width of the stream here is about one hundred yards, its banks are mo-

derately high and scantily covered with wood. We afterwards twice carried the cargoes along its banks to avoid a very stony rapid, and then crossed the first Carp Portage in longitude  $114^{\circ} 2' 01''$  W., variation of the compass  $32^{\circ} 30' 40''$  E., and encamped on the borders of Lower Carp Lake.

The chief having told us that this was a good lake for fishing, we determined on halting for a day or two to recruit our men, of whom three were lame, and several others had swelled legs. The chief himself went forward to look after the hunters, and promised to make a fire as a signal if they had killed any rein-deer. All the Indians had left us in the course of yesterday and to-day to seek these animals, except the guide Keskarrah.

*August 10.*—The nets furnishing only four carp, we embarked for the purpose of searching for a better spot, and encamped again on the shores of the same lake. The spirits of the men were much revived by seeing some recent traces of rein-deer at

this place, which circumstance caused them to cherish the hope of soon getting a supply of meat from the hunters. They were also gratified by finding abundance of blue berries near the encampment, which made an agreeable and substantial addition to their otherwise scanty fare. We were teased by sand-flies this evening, although the thermometer did not rise above  $45^{\circ}$ . The country through which we had travelled for some days consists principally of granite, intermixed in some spots with mica-slate, often passing into clay-slate. But the borders of Lower Carp Lake, where the gneiss formation prevails, are composed of hills, having less altitude, fewer precipices, and more rounded summits. The valleys are less fertile, containing a gravelly soil and fewer trees; so that the country has throughout a more barren aspect.

*August 11.*—Having caught sufficient trout, white-fish, and carp, yesterday and this morning, to afford the party two hearty meals, and the men having recovered their fatigue, we proceeded on our journey.



crossed the Upper Carp Portage, and embarked on the lake of that name, where we had the gratification of paddling for ten miles. We put up at its termination to fish, by the advice of our guide, and the following observations were then taken: longitude  $113^{\circ} 46' 35''$  W., variation of the compass  $36^{\circ} 45' 30''$  E., dip  $87^{\circ} 11' 48''$ . At this place we first perceived the north end of our dipping-needle to pass the perpendicular line when the instrument was faced to the west.

We had scarcely quitted the encampment next day before an Indian met us, with the agreeable communication, that the hunters had made several fires, which were certain indications of their having killed rein-deer. This intelligence inspired our companions with fresh energy, and they quickly traversed the next portage, and paddled through the Rein-Deer Lake; at the north side of it we found the canoes of our hunters, and learned from our guide, that the Indians usually leave their canoes here, as the water communication on their hunting grounds is bad.

The Yellow-Knife River had now dwindled into an insignificant rivulet, and we could not trace it beyond the next lake, except as a mere brook. The latitude of its source  $64^{\circ} 1' 30''$  N., longitude  $113^{\circ} 36'$  W., and its length is one hundred and fifty-six statute miles. Though this river is of sufficient breadth and depth for navigating in canoes, yet I conceive its course is too much interrupted by cascades and rapids for its ever being used as a channel for the conveyance of merchandise. Whilst the crews were employed in making a portage over the foot of Prospect Hill, we ascended to the top of it, and as it is the highest ground in the neighbourhood, its summit, which is about five hundred feet above the water, commands an extensive view.

Akaitcho, who was here with his family pointed out to us the smoke of the distant fires which the hunters had made. The prospect is agreeably diversified by an intermixture of hill and valley, and the appearance of twelve lakes in different directions. On the borders of these lakes a few

thin pine groves occur, but the country in general is destitute of almost every vegetable, except a few berry-bearing shrubs and lichens, and has a very barren aspect. The hills are composed of gneiss, but their acclivities are covered with a coarse gravelly soil. There are many large loose stones both on their sides and summits, composed of the same materials as the solid rock.

We crossed another lake in the evening, encamped and set the nets. The chief made a large fire to announce our situation to the hunters.

*August 13.*—We caught twenty fish this morning, but they were small, and furnished but a scanty breakfast for the party. Whilst this meal was preparing, our Canadian voyagers, who had been for some days past murmuring at their meagre diet, and striving to get the whole of our little provision to consume at once, broke out into open discontent, and several of them threatened they would not proceed forward, unless more food was given to them. This con-

duct was the more unpardonable, as they saw we were rapidly approaching the fires of the hunters, and that provision might soon be expected. I, therefore, felt the duty incumbent on me to address them in the strongest manner on the danger of insubordination, and to assure them of my determination to inflict the heaviest punishment on any that should persist in their refusal to go on, or in any other way attempt to retard the Expedition. I considered this decisive step necessary, having learned from the gentlemen most intimately acquainted with the character of the Canadian voyagers, that they invariably try how far they can impose upon every new master, and that they will continue to be disobedient and intractable if they once gain any ascendancy over him. I must admit, however, that the present hardships of our companions were of a kind which few could support without murmuring, and no one could witness without a sincere pity for their sufferings.

After this discussion we went forward until sunset. In the course of the day we

crossed seven lakes and as many portages. Just as we had encamped we were delighted to see four of the hunters arrive with the flesh of two rein-deer. This seasonable supply, though only sufficient for this evening's and the next day's consumption, instantly revived the spirits of our companions, and they immediately forgot all their cares. As we did not, after this period, experience any deficiency of food during this journey, they worked extremely well, and never again reflected upon us, as they had done before, for rashly bringing them into an inhospitable country, where the means of subsistence could not be procured.

Several blue fish, resembling the grayling, were caught in a stream which flows out of Hunter's Lake. It is remarkable for the largeness of the dorsal fin and the beauty of its colours.

*August 14.*—Having crossed the Hunter's Portage, we entered the lake of the same name, in latitude  $64^{\circ} 6' 47''$  N., longitude  $113^{\circ} 25' 00''$  W.; but soon quitted it by



desire of the Indian guide, and diverged more to the eastward, that we might get into the line upon which our hunters had gone. This was the only consideration that could have induced us to remove to a chain of small lakes, connected by long portages. We crossed three of these, and then were obliged to encamp to rest the men. The country is bare of wood except a few dwarf birch bushes, which grow near the borders of the lakes, and here and there a few stunted pines; and our fuel principally consisted of the roots of decayed pines, which we had some difficulty to collect in sufficient quantity for cooking. When this material is wanting, the rein-deer lichen and other mosses that grow in profusion on the gravelly acclivities of the hills are used as substitutes. Three more of the hunters arrived with meat this evening, which supply came very opportunely, as our nets were unproductive. At eight P.M., a faint Aurora Borealis appeared to the southward, the night was cold, the wind strong from N.W.

We were detained some time in the following morning before the fishing nets, which had sunk in the night, could be recovered.

After starting we first crossed the Orkney Lake, then a portage which brought us to Sandy Lake, and here we missed one of our barrels of powder, which the steersman of the canoe then recollected had been left the day before. He and two other men were sent back to search for it, in the small canoe. The rest of the party proceeded to the portage on the north side of the Grizzle-Bear Lake, where the hunters had made a deposit of meat, and there encamped to await their return, which happened at nine P.M., with the powder. We perceived, from the direction of this lake, that considerable labour would have been spared if we had continued our course yesterday instead of striking off at the guide's suggestion, as the bottom of this lake cannot be far separated from either Hunter's Lake or the one to the westward of it. The chief and all the Indians went off to hunt, accom-

panied by Pierre St. Germain, the interpreter. They returned at night, bringing some meat, and reported that they had put the carcasses of several rein-deer *en cache*. These were sent for early next morning, and as the weather was unusually warm, the thermometer at noon being  $77^{\circ}$ , we remained stationary all day, that the women might prepare the meat for keeping, by stripping the flesh from the bones, and ~~drying it in the sun over a slow fire.~~ The hunters were again successful, and by the evening we had collected the carcasses of seventeen deer. As this was a sufficient store to serve us until we arrived at Winter Lake, the chief proposed that he and his hunters should proceed to that place and collect some provision against our arrival. He also requested that we would allow him to be absent ten days to provide his family with clothing, as the skin of the rein-deer is unfit for that purpose after the month of September. We could not refuse to grant such a reasonable request, but caused St. Germain to accompany him, that his absence

might not exceed the appointed time. Previous to his departure the chief warned us to be constantly on our guard against the grizzly bears, which he described as being numerous in this vicinity, and very ferocious; one had been seen this day by an Indian, to which circumstance the lake owes its appellation. We afterwards learned that the only bear in this part of the country is the brown bear, and that this by no means possesses the ferocity which the Indians, with their usual love of exaggeration, ascribe to it. The fierce grizzly bear, which frequents the sources of the Missouri, is not found on the barren grounds.

The shores of this lake and the neighbouring hills are principally composed of sand and gravel; they are much varied in their outline, and present some picturesque scenery.

The following observations were taken here: latitude  $64^{\circ} 15' 17''$  N., longitude  $113^{\circ} 2' 39''$  W.; variation of the compass  $36^{\circ} 50' 47''$  E.; and dip of the needle  $87^{\circ} 20' 35''$ .

On August the 17th, having finished drying the meat, which had been retarded by the heavy showers of rain that fell in the morning, we embarked at one P.M., and crossed two lakes and two portages. The last of these was two thousand and sixty-six paces long, and very rugged, so that the men were much fatigued. On the next day we received the flesh of four rein-deer by the small canoe which had been sent for it, and heard that the hunters had killed several more deer on our route. We saw many of these animals as we passed along; and our companions, delighted with the prospect of having food in abundance, now began to accompany their paddling with singing, which they had discontinued ever since our provisions became scarce. We passed from one small lake to another over four portages, then crossed a lake about six miles in diameter, and encamped on its border, where, finding pines, we enjoyed the luxury of a good fire, which we had not done for some days. At ten P.M. the Aurora Borealis appeared very brilliant in an arch



across the zenith, from north-west to south-east, which afterwards gave place to a beautiful corona borealis.

*August 19.*—After crossing a portage of five hundred and ninety-five paces, a small lake and another portage of two thousand paces, which occupied the crews seven hours, we embarked on a small stream, running towards the north-west, which carried us to the lake, where Akaitcho proposed that we should pass the winter. The officers ascended several of the loftiest hills in the course of the day, prompted by a natural anxiety to examine the spot which was to be their residence for many months. The prospect, however, was not then the most agreeable, as the borders of the lake seemed to be scantily furnished with wood, and that of a kind too small for the purposes of building.

We perceived the smoke of a distant fire which the Indians suppose had been made by some of the Dog-ribbed tribe, who occasionally visit this part of the country.

Embarking at seven next morning, we

paddled to the western extremity of the lake, and there found a small river, which flows out of it to the S.W. To avoid a strong rapid at its commencement, we made a portage, and then crossed to the north bank of the river, where the Indians recommended that the winter establishment should be erected, and we soon found that the situation they had chosen possessed all the advantages we could desire. The trees were numerous, and of a far greater size than we had supposed them to be in a distant view, some of the pines being thirty or forty feet high, and two feet in diameter at the root. We determined on placing the house on the summit of the bank, which commands a beautiful prospect of the surrounding country. The view in the front is bounded at the distance of three miles by round-backed hills; to the eastward and westward lie the Winter and Round-rock Lakes, which are connected by the Winter River, whose banks are well clothed with pines, and ornamented with a profusion of mosses, lichens, and shrubs.

In the afternoon we read divine service, and offered our thanksgiving to the Almighty for his goodness in having brought us thus far on our journey; a duty which we never neglected when stationary on the sabbath.

The united length of the portages we had crossed, since leaving Fort Providence, is twenty-one statute miles and a half; and as our men had to traverse each portage four times, with a load of one hundred and eighty pounds, and return three times light, they walked in the whole upwards of one hundred and fifty miles. The total length of our voyage from Chipewyan is five hundred and fifty-three miles.\*

A fire was made on the south side of the river, to inform the chief of our arrival,

	Statute Miles.
* Stony and Slave Rivers .....	260
Slave Lake .....	107
Yellow-Knife River .....	156.5
Barren country between the source of the Yellow-Knife River and Fort Enter- prise .....	29.5

which spreading before a strong wind caught the whole wood, and we were completely enveloped in a cloud of smoke for the three following days.

On the next morning our voyagers were divided into two parties, the one to cut the wood for the building of a store-house, and the other to fetch the meat as the hunters procured it. An interpreter was sent with Keskarrah, the guide, to search for the Indians who had made the fire seen on Saturday, from whom we might obtain some supplies of provision. An Indian was also despatched to Akaitcho, with directions for him to come to this place directly, and bring whatever provision he had, as we were desirous of proceeding without delay to the Copper-Mine River. In the evening our men brought in the carcasses of seven reindeer, which two hunters had shot yesterday, and the women commenced drying the meat for our journey. We also obtained a good supply of fish from our nets to-day.

A heavy rain on the 23d, prevented the men from working, either at the building,

or going for meat; but on the next day the weather was fine, and they renewed their labours. The thermometer that day did not rise higher than  $42^{\circ}$ , and it fell to  $31^{\circ}$  before midnight. On the morning of the 25th, we were surprised by some early symptoms of the approach of winter; the small pools were frozen over, and a flock of geese passed to the southward. In the afternoon, however, a fog came on, which afterwards changed into rain, and the ice quickly disappeared. We suffered great anxiety all the next day respecting John Hepburn, who had gone to hunt before sunrise on the 25th, and had been absent ever since. About four hours after his departure the wind changed, and a dense fog obscured every mark by which his course to the tents could be directed, and we thought it probable he had been wandering in an opposite direction to our situation, as the two hunters who had been sent to look for him, returned at sunset without having seen him. Akaitcho arrived with his party, and we were greatly disappointed at finding they



had stored up only fifteen rein-deer for us. St. Germain informed us that having heard of the death of the chief's brother-in-law, they had spent several days in bewailing his loss, instead of hunting. We learned also, that the decease of this man had caused another party of the tribe who had been sent by Mr. Wentzel to prepare provision for us on the banks of the Copper-Mine River, to remove to the shores of the Great Bear Lake, distant from our proposed route. Mortifying as these circumstances were, they produced less painful sensations than we experienced in the evening, by the refusal of Akaitcho to accompany us in the proposed descent of the Copper-Mine River. When Mr. Wentzel, by my direction, communicated to him my intention of proceeding at once on that service, he desired a conference with me upon the subject, which being immediately granted, he began, by stating that the very attempt would be rash and dangerous, as the weather was cold, the leaves were falling, some geese had passed to the southward, and the winter would shortly

set in; and that, as he considered the lives of all who went on such a journey would be forfeited, he neither would go himself nor permit his hunters to accompany us. He said there was no wood within eleven days' march, during which time we could not have any fire, as the moss which the Indians use in their summer excursions, would be too wet for burning, in consequence of the recent rains; that we should be forty days in descending the Copper-Mine River, six of which would be expended in getting to its banks, and that we might be blocked up by the ice in the next moon; and during the whole journey the party must experience great suffering for want of food, as the reindeer had already left the river.

He was now reminded that these statements were very different from the account he had given, both at Fort Providence and on the route hither; and that up to this moment, we had been encouraged by his conversation to expect that the party might descend the Copper-Mine River, accompanied by the Indians. He replied, that at

the former place he had been unacquainted with our slow mode of travelling, and that the alteration in his opinion arose from the advance of winter.

We now informed him that we were provided with instruments by which we could ascertain the state of the air and water, and that we did not imagine the winter to be so near as he supposed; however, we promised to return on discovering the first change in the season. He was also told that all the baggage being left behind, our canoes would now, of course, travel infinitely more expeditiously than any thing he had hitherto witnessed. Akaitcho appeared to feel hurt that we should continue to press the matter further, and answered with some warmth: "Well, I have said every thing I can urge to dissuade you from going on this service, on which it seems you wish to sacrifice your own lives as well as the Indians who might attend you; however, if after all I have said, you are determined to go, some of my young men shall join the party, because it shall not be said that we permitted you to

die alone after having brought you hither ; but from the moment they embark in the canoes, I and my relatives shall lament them as dead."

We could only reply to this forcible appeal, by assuring him and the Indians who were seated around him, that we felt the most anxious solicitude for the safety of every individual, and that it was far from our intention to proceed without considering every argument for and against the proposed journey.

We next informed him, that it would be very desirable to see the river at any rate, that we might give some positive information about its situation and size, in our next letters to the Great Chief; and that we were very anxious to get on its banks, for the purpose of observing an eclipse of the sun, which we described to him, and said would happen in a few days. He received this communication with more temper than the preceding, though he immediately assigned as a reason for his declining to go, that " the Indians must now procure a suf-

ficient quantity of deer-skins for winter clothing for themselves, and dresses for the Canadians, who would need them if they had to travel in the winter." Finding him so averse to proceed, and feeling at the same time how essential his continuance with us was, not only to our future success, but even to our existence during the winter, I closed the conversation here, intending to propose to him next morning, some modification of the plan, which might meet his approbation. Soon after we were gone, however, he informed Mr. Wentzel, with whom he was in the habit of speaking confidentially, that as his advice was neglected, his presence was useless, and he should, therefore, return to Fort Providence with his hunters, after he had collected some winter provision for us. Mr. Wentzel having reported this to me, the night was passed in great anxiety, and after weighing all the arguments that presented themselves to my mind, I came reluctantly to the determination of relinquishing the intention of going any distance down the river this sea-



son. I had considered, that could we ascertain what were the impediments to the navigation of the Copper-Mine River, what wood grew on its banks, if fit for boat building, and whether drift timber existed where the country was naked, our operations next season would be much facilitated; but we had also cherished the hope of reaching the sea this year, for the Indians in their conversations with us, had only spoken of two great rapids as likely to obstruct us. This was a hope extremely painful to give up; for, in the event of success, we should have ascertained whether the sea was clear of ice, and navigable for canoes; have learned the disposition of the Esquimaux; and might have obtained other information that would have had great influence on our future proceedings.

I must confess, however, that my opinion of the probability of our being able to attain so great a desideratum this season had been somewhat altered by the recent changes in the weather, although, had the chief been willing to accompany us with his party, I

should have made the attempt; with the intention, however, of returning immediately upon the first decided appearance of winter.

On the morning of August 27th, having communicated my sentiments to the officers, on the subject of the conference last evening, they all agreed that the descent to the sea this season could not be attempted, without hazarding a complete rupture with the Indians; but they thought that a party should be sent to ascertain the distance and size of the Copper-mine River. These opinions being in conformity with my own, I determined on despatching Messrs. Back and Hood on that service, in a light canoe, as soon as possible.

We witnessed this morning an instance of the versatility of our Indian companions, which gave us much uneasiness, as it regarded the safety of our faithful attendant Hepburn. When they heard, on their arrival last night, of his having been so long absent, they expressed the greatest solicitude about him, and the whole party imme-

diately volunteered to go in search of him as soon as day-light permitted. Their resolutions, however, seem to have been changed, in consequence of the subsequent conversation we had with the chief, and we found all of them indisposed to proceed on that errand this morning; and it was only by much entreaty, that three of the hunters and a boy were prevailed upon to go. They fortunately succeeded in their search, and we were infinitely rejoiced to see Hepburn return with them in the afternoon, though much jaded by the fatigue he had undergone. He had got bewildered, as we had conjectured, in the foggy weather on the 25th, and had been wandering about ever since, except during half an hour that he slept yesterday. He had eaten only a partridge and some berries, for his anxiety of mind had deprived him of appetite; and of a deer which he had shot, he took only the tongue, and the skin to protect himself from the wind and rain. This anxiety, we learned from him, was occasioned by the fear that the party which was about to descend the

Copper-Mine River, might be detained until he was found, or that it might have departed without him. He did not entertain any dread of the white bears, of whose numbers and ferocious attacks the Indians had been constantly speaking, since we had entered the barren grounds. Our fears for his safety, however, were in a considerable degree excited by the accounts we had received of these animals. Having made a hearty supper, he retired to rest, slept soundly, and arose next morning in perfect health.

On the 28th of August, Akaitcho was informed of our intention to send a party to the river, and of the reasons for doing so, of which he approved, when he found that I had relinquished the idea of going myself, in compliance with the desire which he and the Indians had expressed; and he immediately said two of the hunters should go to provide them with food on the journey, and to serve as guides. During this conversation we gathered from him, for the first time, that there might still be some of his

tribe near to the river, from whom the party could get provision. Our next object was to despatch the Indians to their hunting-ground to collect provision for us, and to procure the fat of the deer for our use during the winter, and for making the pemmican we should require in the spring. They were therefore furnished with some ammunition, clothing, and other necessary articles, and directed to take their departure as soon as possible.

Akaitcho came into our tent this evening at supper, and made several pertinent inquiries respecting the eclipse, of which we had spoken last night. He desired to know the effect that would be produced, and the cause of it, which we endeavoured to explain; and having gained this information, he sent for several of his companions, that they might also have it repeated to them. They were most astonished at our knowing the time at which this event should happen, and remarked that this knowledge was a striking proof of the superiority of the whites over the Indians. We took



advantage of this occasion to speak to them respecting the Supreme Being, who ordered all the operations of nature, and to impress on their minds the necessity of paying strict attention to their moral duties, in obedience to his will. They readily assented to all these points, and Akaitcho assured us that both himself and his young men would exert themselves in obtaining provision for us, in return for the interesting communications we had just made to them.

Having received a supply of dried meat from the Indian lodges, we were enabled to equip the party for the Copper-Mine River, and at nine A.M. on the 29th Mr. Back and Mr. Hood embarked on that service in a light canoe, with St. Germain, eight Canadians, and one Indian. We could not furnish them with more than eight days' provision, which, with their blankets, two tents, and a few instruments, composed their lading. Mr. Back, who had charge of the party, was directed to proceed to the river, and if, when he arrived at its banks, the weather should continue to be mild, and the

temperature of the water was not lower than  $40^{\circ}$ , he might embark, and descend the stream for a few days to gain some knowledge of its course, but he was not to go so far as to risk his being able to return to this place in a fortnight with the canoe. But if the weather should be severe, and the temperature of the water below  $40^{\circ}$ , he was not to embark, but return immediately, and endeavour to ascertain the best track for our goods to be conveyed thither next spring.

We had seen that the water decreases rapidly in temperature at this season, and I feared that, if he embarked to descend the river when it was below  $40^{\circ}$ , the canoe might be frozen in, and the crew have to walk back in very severe weather.

As soon as the canoes had started, Akaitcho and the Indians took their departure also, except two of the hunters, who staid behind to kill deer in our neighbourhood, and old Keskarrah and his family, who remained as our guests.

The fishing-nets were this day transferred

from the river, in which they had been set since our arrival, to Winter Lake, whither the fish had removed, and the fishermen built a log-hut on its borders to reside in, that they might attend more closely to their occupation.

The month of September commenced with very disagreeable weather. The temperature of the atmosphere ranged between  $39^{\circ}$  and  $31^{\circ}$  during the first three days, and that of the water in the river decreased from  $49^{\circ}$  to  $44^{\circ}$ . Several rein-deer, and a large flight of white geese, passed to the southward. These circumstances led us to fear for the comfort, if not for the safety, of our absent friends. On the 4th of September we commenced building our dwelling-house, having cut sufficient wood for the frame of it.

In the afternoon of September the 6th, we removed our tent to the summit of a hill, about three miles distant, for the better observing the eclipse, which was calculated to occur on the next morning. We were prevented, however, from witnessing it by

a heavy snow-storm, and the only observation we could then make was to examine whether the temperature of the atmosphere altered during the eclipse, but we found that both the mercurial and spirit thermometers remained steadily at  $30^{\circ}$  for a quarter of an hour previous to its commencement, during its continuance, and for half an hour subsequent to its termination; we remarked the wind increased very much, and the snow fell in heavier flakes just after the estimated time of its commencement. This boisterous weather continued until three P.M., when the wind abated, and the snow changed to rain.

As there was now no immediate occasion for my remaining on the spot, the eclipse being over, and the Indians having removed to their hunting-grounds, Dr. Richardson and I determined on taking a pedestrian excursion to the Copper-Mine River, leaving Mr. Wentzel in charge of the men, and to superintend the buildings. On the morning of September the 9th we commenced our journey, under the guidance of old

Keskarrah, and accompanied by John Hepburn and Samandré, who carried our blankets, cooking utensils, hatchets, and a small supply of dried meat. Our guide led us from the top of one hill to the top of another, making as straight a course to the northward as the numerous lakes, with which the country is intersected, would permit. At noon we reached a remarkable hill, with precipitous sides, named by the Copper Indians the Dog-rib Rock, and its latitude,  $64^{\circ} 34' 52''$  S., was obtained. The canoe-track passes to the eastward of this rock, but we kept to the westward, as being the more direct course. From the time we quitted the banks of Winter River we saw only a few detached clumps of trees; but after we passed Dog-rib Rock even these disappeared, and we travelled through a naked country. In the course of the afternoon Keskarrah killed a rein-deer, and loaded himself with its head and skin, and our men also carried off a few pounds of its flesh for supper; but their loads were altogether too great to permit them to take



much additional weight. Keskarrah offered to us, as a great treat, the raw marrow from the hind legs of the animal, of which all the party ate except myself, and thought it very good. I was also of the same opinion, when I subsequently conquered my then too fastidious taste. We halted for the night on the borders of a small lake, which washed the base of a ridge of sand-hills, about three hundred feet high, having walked in direct distance sixteen miles.

There were four ancient pine-trees here which did not exceed six or seven feet in height, but whose branches spread themselves out for several yards, and we gladly cropped a few twigs to make a bed and to protect us from the frozen ground, still white from a fall of snow which took place in the afternoon. We were about to cut down one of these trees for firewood, but our guide solicited us to spare them, and made us understand by signs that they had been long serviceable to his nation, and that we ought to content ourselves with a few of the smaller branches. As soon as we com-

prehended his request we complied with it, and our attendants having, with some trouble, grubbed up a sufficient quantity of the roots of the dwarf birch to make a fire, we were enabled to prepare a comfortable supper of rein-deer's meat, which we despatched with the appetites which travelling in this country never fails to ensure. We then stretched ourselves out on the pine brush, and, covered by a single blanket, enjoyed a night of sound repose. The small quantity of bed-clothes we carried induced us to sleep without undressing. Old Keskarrah followed a different plan; he stripped himself to the skin, and having toasted his body for a short time over the embers of the fire, he crept under his deer-skin and rags, previously spread out as smoothly as possible, and coiling himself up in a circular form, fell asleep instantly. This custom of undressing to the skin, even when lying in the open air, is common to all the Indian tribes. The thermometer at sunset stood at  $29^{\circ}$ .

Resuming our journey next morning, we

pursued a northerly course, but had to make a considerable circuit round the western ends of two lakes, whose eastern extremities were hidden from our view. The march was very uncomfortable, as the wind was cold, and there was a constant fall of snow until noon; our guide, too, persisted in taking us over the summit of every hill that lay in the route, so that we had the full benefit of the breeze.

We forded two streams in the afternoon flowing between small lakes, and being wet, did not much relish having to halt whilst Keskarrah pursued a herd of rein-deer; but there was no alternative, as he set off and followed them without consulting our wishes. The old man loaded himself with the skin and some meat of the animal he killed, in addition to his former burden; but after walking two miles, finding his charge too heavy for his strength, he spread the skin on the rock, and deposited the meat under some stones, intending to pick them up on our return.

We put up at sunset on the borders of a

large lake, having come twelve miles. A few dwarf birches afforded us but a scanty fire, yet being sheltered from the wind by a sandy bank, we passed the night comfortably, though the temperature was  $30^{\circ}$ . A number of geese passed over us to the southward. We set off early next morning, and marched at a tolerably quick pace. The atmosphere was quite foggy, and our view was limited to a short distance. At noon the sun shone forth for a few minutes, and the latitude  $64^{\circ} 57' 7''$  was observed. The small streams that we had hitherto crossed run uniformly to the southward.

At the end of sixteen miles and a half we encamped amongst a few dwarf pines, and were much rejoiced at having a good fire, as the night was very stormy and cold. The thermometer fluctuated this day between  $31^{\circ}$  and  $35^{\circ}$ . Though the following morning was foggy and rainy, we were not sorry to quit the cold and uncomfortable beds of rock upon which we had slept, and commence our journey at an early hour. After walking about three miles, we passed

over a steep sandy ridge, and found the course of the rivulets running towards the north and north-west. Our progress was slow in the early part of the morning, and we were detained for two hours on the summit of a hill exposed to a very cold wind, whilst our guide went in an unsuccessful pursuit of some rein-deer. After walking a few miles farther the fog cleared away, and Keskarrah pointed out the Copper-Mine River at a distance, and we pushed towards it with all the speed we could put forth. At noon we arrived at an arm of Point Lake, an extensive expansion of the river, and observed the latitude  $65^{\circ} 9' 06''$  N. We continued our walk along the south end of this arm for about a mile farther, and then halted to breakfast amidst a cluster of pines. Here the longitude,  $112^{\circ} 57' 25''$ , was observed. After breakfast we set out and walked along the east side of the arm towards the main body of the lake, leaving Samandr  to prepare an encampment amongst the pines against our return. We found the main channel deep,



its banks high and rocky, and the valleys on its borders interspersed with clusters of spruce-trees. The latter circumstance was a source of much gratification to us. The temperature of its surface water was  $41^{\circ}$ , that of the air being  $43^{\circ}$ . Having gained all the information we could collect from our guide and from personal observation, we retraced our steps to the encampment, and on the way back Hepburn and Keskarrah shot several waveys (*anas hyperborea*), which afforded us a seasonable supply, our stock of provision being nearly exhausted. These birds were feeding in large flocks on the crow-berries, which grew plentifully on the sides of the hills. We reached the encampment after dark, found a comfortable hut prepared for our reception, made an excellent supper, and slept soundly though it snowed hard the whole night.

The hills in this neighbourhood are higher than those about Fort Enterprise; they stand, however, in the same detached manner, without forming connected ranges,

and the bottom of every valley is occupied, either by a small lake or a stony marsh. On the borders of such of these lakes as communicate with the Copper-Mine River, there are a few groves of spruce trees, generally growing on accumulations of sand, on the acclivities of the hills.

We did not quit the encampment on the morning of 13th September until nine o'clock, in consequence of a constant fall of snow; but at that hour we set out on our return to Fort Enterprise, and taking a route somewhat different from the one by which we came, kept to the eastward of a chain of lakes. Soon after noon the weather became extremely disagreeable; a cold northerly gale came on, attended by snow and sleet; and the temperature fell very soon from  $43^{\circ}$  to  $34^{\circ}$ . The waveys, alarmed at the sudden change, flew over our heads in great numbers to a milder climate. We walked as quickly as possible to get to a place that would furnish some fuel and shelter; but the fog occasioned us to make frequent halts, from the inability of our

guide to trace his way. At length we came to a spot which afforded us plenty of dwarf birches, but they were so much frozen, and the snow fell so thick, that upwards of two hours were wasted in endeavouring to make a fire; during which time our clothes were freezing upon us. At length our efforts were crowned with success, and after a good supper we laid, or rather sat, down to sleep; for the nature of the ground obliged us to pass the night in a demi-erect position, with our backs against a bank of earth. The thermometer was  $16^{\circ}$  at six P. M.

After enjoying a more comfortable night's rest than we had expected, we set off at day-break; the thermometer then standing at  $18^{\circ}$ . The ground was covered with snow, the small lakes were frozen, and the whole scene had a wintry appearance. We got on but slowly at first, owing to an old sprained ankle, which had been very troublesome to me for the last three days, and was this morning excessively painful. In forming a rivulet, however, the application of cold water gave me immediate relief, and I

walked with ease the remainder of the day. In the afternoon we rejoined our track outwards and came to the place where Keskarrah had made his deposit of provision, which proved a very acceptable supply, as our stock was exhausted. We then crossed some sand hills, and encamped amidst a few small pines, having walked thirteen miles.

The comfort of a good fire made us soon insensible to the fatigue we had experienced through the day, in marching over the rugged stones, whose surface was rendered slippery by the frost. The thermometer at seven P.M. stood at  $27^{\circ}$ .

We set off at sun-rise next morning, and our provision being expended, pushed on as fast as we could to Fort Enterprise, where we arrived at eight P.M., almost exhausted by a harassing day's march of twenty-two miles. A substantial supper of rein-deer steaks soon restored our vigour. We had the happiness of meeting our friends Mr. Back and Mr. Hood, who had returned from their excursion on the day succeeding

that on which we sat out; and I received from them the following account of their journey.

They proceeded up the Winter River to the north end of the Little Marten Lake, and then the guide, being unacquainted with the route by water to the Copper-Mine River, proposed that the canoe should be left. Upon this they ascended the loftiest hill in the neighbourhood, to examine whether they could discover any large lakes, or water communication in the direction where the guide described the river to be. They only saw a small rivulet, which was too shallow for the canoe, and also wide of the course; and as they perceived the crew would have to carry it over a rugged hilly track, they judiciously decided on leaving it, and proceeding forward on foot. Having deposited the canoe among a few dwarf birch bushes, they commenced their march, carrying their tents, blankets, cooking utensils, and a part of the dried meat. St. Germain, however, had previously delineated with charcoal, a man and





Drawn by Lieut. Hood R.N.

Engr'd by E. Finden



a house on a piece of bark, which he placed over the canoe and the few things that were left, to point out to the Dog-Ribs that they belonged to white people.

The party reached the shores of Point Lake, through which the Copper-Mine River runs, on the 1st of September. The next day was too stormy for them to march, but on the 3d, they proceeded along its shores to the westward, round a mountainous promontory, and perceiving the course of the lake extending to the W.N.W., they encamped near some pines, and then enjoyed the luxury of a good fire, for the first time since their departure from us. The temperature of the water in the lake was  $35^{\circ}$ , and of the air  $32^{\circ}$ , but the latter fell to  $20^{\circ}$  in the course of that night. As their principal object was to ascertain whether any arm of the lake branched nearer to Fort Enterprise than the part they had fallen upon, to which the transport of our goods could be more easily made next spring, they returned on its borders to the eastward, being satisfied by the appearance of the

mountains between south and west, that no further examination was necessary in that direction; and they continued their march until the 6th at noon, without finding any part of the lake inclining nearer the fort. They therefore encamped to observe the eclipse, which was to take place on the following morning; but a violent snow storm rendering the observation impossible, they commenced their return, and after a comfortless and laborious march regained their canoe on the 10th, and embarking in it, arrived the same evening at the house.

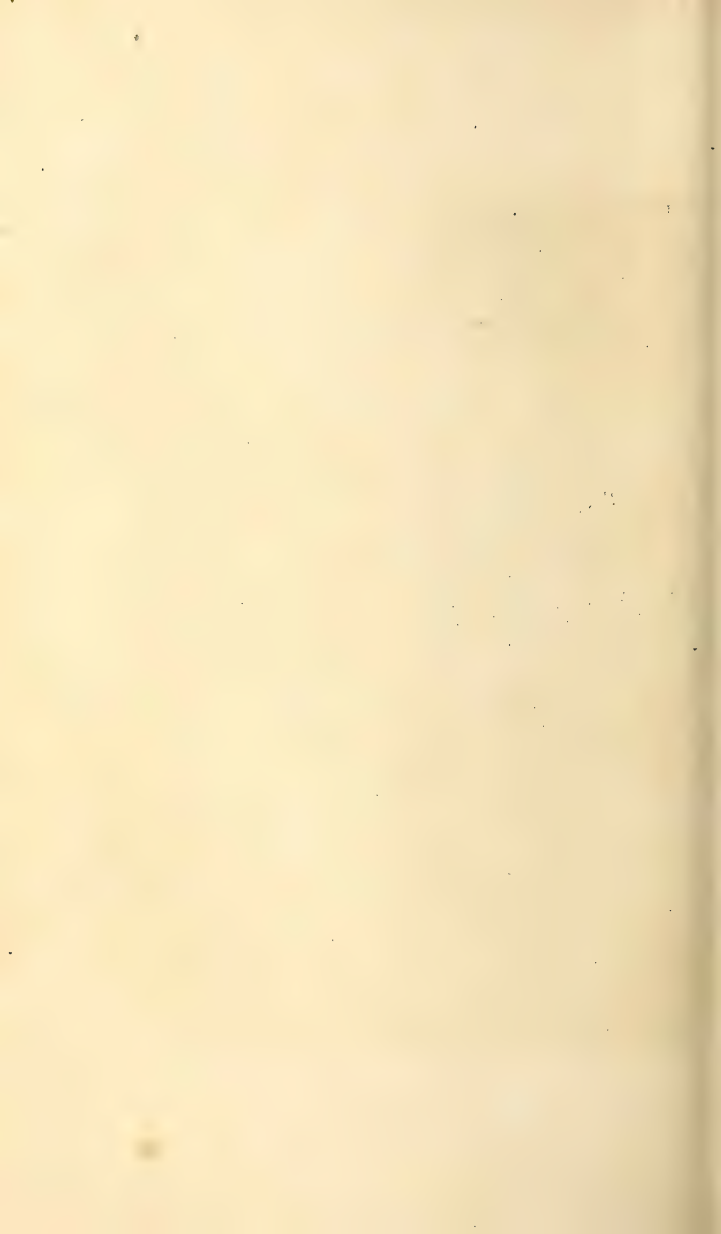
Point Lake varied, as far as they traced, from one to three miles in width. Its main course was nearly east and west, but several arms branched off in different directions. I was much pleased with the able manner in which these officers executed the service they had been despatched upon, and was gratified to learn from them that their companions had conducted themselves extremely well, and borne the fatigues of their journey most cheerfully. They scarcely ever had more than sufficient fuel to boil



Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, R. A.

Engr'd by E. Finden.





the kettle; and were generally obliged to lie down in their wet clothes, and consequently suffered much from cold.

The distance which the parties travelled in their journey to and from Point Lake, may be estimated at one hundred and ten statute miles, which being added to the distances given in the preceding pages, amounts to one thousand five hundred and twenty miles that the expedition travelled in 1820, up to the time of its residence at Fort Enterprise.



## CHAPTER VIII.

*Transactions at Fort Enterprise—Mr. Back's Narrative of his Journey to Chipewyan and Return.*

*September, 1820.*—DURING our little expedition to the Copper-Mine River, Mr. Wentzel had made great progress in the erection of our winter-house, having nearly roofed it in. But before proceeding to give an account of a ten month's residence at this place, henceforth designated Fort Enterprise, I may premise, that I shall omit many of the ordinary occurrences of a North American winter, as they have been already detailed in so able and interesting a manner by Ellis,\* and confine myself principally to the circumstances which had an influence on our progress in the ensuing

\* Voyage to Hudson's Bay in the Dobbs and California.

summer. The observations on the magnetic needle, the temperature of the atmosphere, the Aurora Borealis, and other meteorological phenomena, together with the mineralogical and botanical notices, being less interesting to the general reader, are omitted in this edition.

The men continued to work diligently at the house, and by the 30th of September had nearly completed it for our reception, when a heavy fall of rain washed the greater part of the mud off the roof. This rain was remarked by the Indians as unusual, after what they had deemed so decided a commencement of winter in the early part of the month. The mean temperature for the month was  $33\frac{3}{4}^{\circ}$ , but the thermometer had sunk as low as  $16^{\circ}$ , and on one occasion rose to  $53^{\circ}$ .

Besides the party constantly employed at the house, two men were appointed to fish, and others were occasionally sent for meat, as the hunters procured it. This latter employment, although extremely laborious, was always relished by the Canadians, as

they never failed to use a prescriptive right of helping themselves to the fattest and most delicate parts of the deer. Towards the end of the month, the rein-deer began to quit the barren grounds, and came into the vicinity of the house, on their way to the woods; and the success of the hunters being consequently great, the necessity of sending for the meat considerably retarded the building of the house. In the mean time we resided in our canvass tents, which proved very cold habitations, although we maintained a fire in front of them, and also endeavoured to protect ourselves from the piercing winds by a barricade of pine branches.

On the 6th of October, the house being completed, we struck our tents, and removed into it. It was merely a log-building, fifty feet long, and twenty-four wide, divided into a hall, three bed rooms, and a kitchen. The walls and roof were plastered with clay, the floors laid with planks rudely squared with the hatchet, and the windows closed with parchment of deer-skin. The



clay, which, from the coldness of the weather, required to be tempered before the fire with hot water, froze as it was daubed on, and afterwards cracked in such a manner as to admit the wind from every quarter; yet, compared with the tents, our new habitation appeared comfortable; and having filled our capacious clay-built chimney with fagots, we spent a cheerful evening before the invigorating blaze. The change was peculiarly beneficial to Dr. Richardson, who, having, in one of his excursions, incautiously laid down on the frozen side of a hill when heated with walking, had caught a severe inflammatory sore throat, which became daily worse whilst we remained in the tents, but began to mend soon after he was enabled to confine himself to the more equable warmth of the house. We took up our abode at first on the floor, but our working party, who had shown such skill as house carpenters, soon proved themselves to be, with the same tools, (the hatchet and crooked knife,) excellent cabinet makers,

and daily added a table, chair, or bedstead, to the comforts of our establishment. The crooked knife, generally made of an old file, bent and tempered by heat, serves an Indian or Canadian voyager for plane, chisel, and auger. With it the snow-shoe and canoe-timbers are fashioned, the deals of their sledges reduced to the requisite thinness and polish, and their wooden bowls and spoons hollowed out. Indeed, though not quite so requisite for existence as the hatchet, yet without its aid there would be little comfort in these wilds.

On the 7th we were gratified by a sight of the sun, after it had been obscured for twelve days. On this and several following days the meridian sun melted the light covering of snow or hoar frost on the lichens, which clothe the barren grounds, and rendered them so tender as to attract great herds of rein-deer to our neighbourhood. On the morning of the 10th I estimated the numbers I saw during a short walk, at upwards of two thousand. They form into

herds of different sizes, from ten to a hundred, according as their fears or accident induce them to unite or separate.

The females, being at this time more lean and active, usually lead the van. The haunches of the males are now covered to the depth of two inches or more with fat, which is beginning to get red and high flavoured, and is considered a sure indication of the commencement of the rutting season. Their horns, which in the middle of August were yet tender, have now attained their proper size, and are beginning to lose their hairy covering which hangs from them in ragged filaments. The horns of the reindeer vary, not only with its sex and age, but are otherwise so uncertain in their growth, that they are never alike in any two individuals. The old males shed theirs about the end of December; the females retain them until the disappearance of the snow enables them to frequent the barren grounds, which may be stated to be about the middle or end of May, soon after which period they proceed towards the sea-coast

and drop their young. The young males lose their horns about the same time with the females, or a little earlier, some of them as early as April. The hair of the reindeer falls in July, and is succeeded by a short thick coat of mingled clove, deep reddish, and yellowish browns; the belly and under parts of the neck, &c. remaining white. As the winter approaches, the hair becomes longer, and lighter in its colours, and it begins to loosen in May, being then much worn on the sides, from the animal rubbing itself against trees and stones. It becomes grayish and almost white before it is completely shed. The Indians form their robes of the skins procured in autumn, when the hair is short. Towards the spring the larvæ of the *œstrus* attaining a large size, produce so many perforations in the skins, that they are good for nothing. The cicatrices only of these holes are to be seen in August, but a fresh set of *ova* have in the mean time been deposited.\*

\* “ It is worthy of remark, that in the month of May a very great number of large larvæ exist under

The rein-deer retire from the sea-coast in July and August, rut in October on the verge of the barren grounds, and shelter themselves in the woods during the winter. They are often induced by a few fine days in winter, to pay a transitory visit to their favourite pastures in the barren country, but their principal movement to the northward commences generally in the end of April, when the snow first begins to melt on the sides of the hills; and early in May, when large patches of the ground are visible, they are on the banks of the Copper-Mine River. The females take the lead in this spring migration, and bring forth their young on the sea-coast, about the end of May or beginning of June. There are cer-

the mucous membrane at the root of the tongue, and posterior part of the nares and pharynx. The Indians consider them to belong to the same species with the *œstrus*, that deposits its ova under the skin: to us the larvæ of the former appeared more flattened than those of the latter. Specimens of both kinds, preserved in spirits, were destroyed by the frequent falls they received on the portages." — DR. RICHARDSON'S *Journal*.



tain spots or passes well known to the Indians, through which the deer invariably pass in their migrations to and from the coast, and it has been observed that they always travel against the wind. The principal food of the rein-deer in the barren grounds, consists of the *cetraria nivalis* and *cucullata*, *cenomyce rangiferina*, *cornicularia ochrileuca*, and other lichens, and they also eat the hay or dry grass which is found in the swamps in autumn. In the woods they feed on the different lichens which hang from the trees. They are accustomed to gnaw their fallen antlers, and are said also to devour mice.

The weight of a full grown barren-ground deer, exclusive of the offal, varies from ninety to one hundred and thirty pounds. There is, however, a much larger kind found in the woody parts of the country, whose carcase weighs from two hundred to two hundred and forty pounds. This kind never leaves the woods, but its skin is as much perforated by the gad-fly as that of the others; a presumptive proof that the

smaller species are not driven to the sea-coast solely by the attacks of that insect. There are a few rein-deer occasionally killed in the spring, whose skins are entire, and these are always fat, whereas the others are lean at that season. This insect likewise infests the red-deer (*wamaskeesh*), but its ova are not found in the skin of the moose, or buffalo, nor, as we have been informed, of the sheep and goat that inhabit the Rocky Mountains, although the rein-deer found in those parts, (which are of an unusually large kind,) are as much tormented by them as the barren-ground variety.

The herds of rein-deer are attended in their migrations by bands of wolves, which destroy a great many of them. The Copper Indians kill the rein-deer in the summer with the gun, or taking advantage of a favourable disposition of the ground, they enclose a herd upon a neck of land, and drive them into a lake, where they fall an easy prey; but in the rutting season and in the spring, when they are numerous on the skirts of the woods, they catch them in

snares. The snares are simple nooses, formed in a rope made of twisted sinew, which are placed in the aperture of a slight hedge, constructed of the branches of trees. This hedge is so disposed as to form several winding compartments, and although it is by no means strong, yet the deer seldom attempt to break through it. The herd is led into the labyrinth by two converging rows of poles, and one is generally caught at each of the openings by the noose placed there. The hunter, too, lying in ambush, stabs some of them with his bayonet as they pass by, and the whole herd frequently becomes his prey. Where wood is scarce, a piece of turf turned up answers the purpose of a pole to conduct them towards the snares.

The rein-deer has a quick eye, but the hunter, by keeping to leeward and using a little caution, may approach very near; their apprehensions being much more easily roused by the smell than the sight of any unusual object. Indeed their curiosity often causes them to come close up and wheel

around the hunter; thus affording him a good opportunity of singling out the fattest of the herd, and upon these occasions they often become so confused by the shouts and gestures of their enemy, that they run backwards and forwards with great rapidity, but without the power of making their escape.

The Copper Indians find by experience that a white dress attracts them more readily, and they often succeed in bringing them within shot, by kneeling and vibrating the gun from side to side, in imitation of the motion of the deer's horns when he is in the act of rubbing his head against a stone.

The Dog-Rib Indians have a mode of killing these animals, which, though simple, is very successful. It was thus described by Mr. Wentzel, who resided long amongst that people.—The hunters go in pairs, the foremost man carrying in one hand the horns and part of the skin of the head of a deer, and in the other a small bundle of twigs, against which he, from time to time,

rubs the horns, imitating the gestures peculiar to the animal. His comrade follows, treading exactly in his footsteps, and holding the guns of both in a horizontal position, so that the muzzles project under the arms of him who carries the head. Both hunters have a fillet of white skin round their foreheads, and the foremost has a strip of the same kind round his wrists. They approach the herd by degrees, raising their legs very slowly, but setting them down somewhat suddenly, after the manner of a deer, and always taking care to lift their right or left feet simultaneously. If any of the herd leave off feeding to gaze upon this extraordinary phenomenon, it instantly stops, and the head begins to play its part by licking its shoulders, and performing other necessary movements. In this way the hunters attain the very centre of the herd without exciting suspicion, and have leisure to single out the fattest. The hindmost man then pushes forward his comrade's gun, the head is dropt, and they both fire nearly at the same instant. The herd



scampers off, the hunters trot after them; in a short time the poor animals halt to ascertain the cause of their terror, their foes stop at the same instant, and having loaded as they ran, greet the gazers with a second fatal discharge. The consternation of the deer increases, they run to and fro in the utmost confusion, and sometimes a great part of the herd is destroyed within the space of a few hundred yards.

A party who had been sent to Akaitcho returned, bringing three hundred and seventy pounds of dried meat, and two hundred and twenty pounds of suet, together with the unpleasant information, that a still larger quantity of the latter article had been found and carried off, as he supposed, by some Dog-ribs, who had passed that way.

The weather becoming daily colder, all the lakes in the neighbourhood of the house were completely, and the river partially, frozen over by the middle of the month. The rein-deer now began to quit us for more southerly and better-sheltered pastures. Indeed, their longer residence in

our neighbourhood would have been of little service to us, for our ammunition was almost completely expended, though we had dealt it of late with a very sparing hand to the Indians. We had, however, already secured in the store-house the carcasses of one hundred deer, together with one thousand pounds of suet, and some dried meat; and had, moreover, eighty deer stowed up at various distances from the house. The necessity of employing the men to build a house for themselves, before the weather became too severe, obliged us to put the latter *en cache*, as the voyagers term it, instead of adopting the more safe plan of bringing them to the house. Putting a deer *en cache*, means merely protecting it against the wolves, and still more destructive wolverenes, by heavy loads of wood or stones; the latter animal, however, sometimes digs underneath the pile, and renders the precaution abortive.

On the 18th, Mr. Back and Mr. Wentzel set out for Fort Providence, accompanied by Beauparlant, Belanger, and two Indians,

Akaiyazza and Thoolezzeh, with their wives, the Little Forehead, and the Smiling Marten. Mr. Back had volunteered to go and make the necessary arrangements for transporting the stores we expected from Cumberland House, and to endeavour to obtain some additional supplies from the establishments at Slave Lake. If any accident should have prevented the arrival of our stores, and the establishments at Moose-Deer Island should be unable to supply the deficiency, he was, if he found himself equal to the task, to proceed to Chipewyan. Ammunition was essential to our existence, and a considerable supply of tobacco was also requisite, not only for the comfort of the Canadians, who use it largely, and had stipulated for it in their engagements, but also as a means of preserving the friendship of the Indians. Blankets, cloth, and iron-work, were scarcely less indispensable to equip our men for the advance next season.

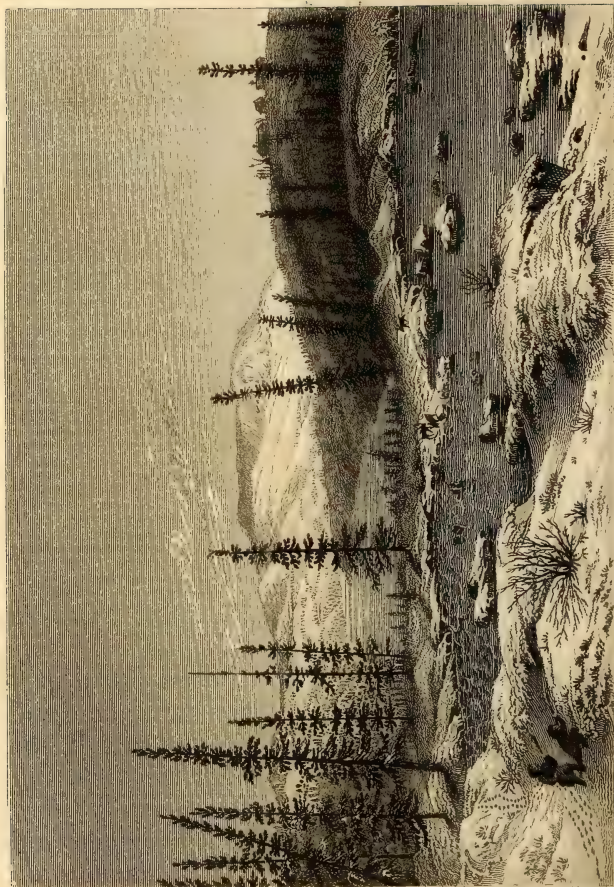
Mr. Wentzel accompanied Mr. Back, to assist him in obtaining from the traders, on the score of old friendship, that which they

might be inclined to deny to our necessities. I forwarded by them letters to the Colonial Office and Admiralty, detailing the proceedings of the Expedition up to this period.

On the 22d we were surprized by a visit from a dog; the poor animal was in low condition, and much fatigued. Our Indians discovered, by marks on his ears, that he belonged to the Dog-ribs. This tribe, unlike the Chipewyans and Copper Indians, had preserved that useful associate of man, although from their frequent intercourse with the latter people, they were not ignorant of the prediction alluded to in a former page. One of our interpreters was immediately despatched, with an Indian, to endeavour to trace out the Dog-ribs, whom he supposed might be concealed in the neighbourhood, from the dread of the Copper Indians; although we had no doubt of their coming to us, were they aware of our being here. The interpreter, however, returned without having discovered any traces of strange Indians; a circumstance which







Drawn by Lieut Back R.N.

# WINTER VIEW OF FORT ENTERPRISE.

Engd. by E. Finden.

*Snow melting, May 13, 1821.*

led us to conclude, that the dog had strayed from his masters a considerable time before.

Towards the end of the month the men completed their house, and took up their abode in it. It was thirty-four feet long and eighteen feet wide; was divided into two apartments, and was placed at right angles to the officers' dwelling, and facing the store-house; the three buildings forming three sides of a quadrangle.

On the 26th Akaitcho and his party arrived, the hunting in this neighbourhood being terminated for the season, by the deer having retired southward to the shelter of the woods.

The arrival of this large party was a serious inconvenience to us, from our being compelled to issue them daily rates of provision from the store. The want of ammunition prevented us from equipping and sending them to the woods to hunt; and although they are accustomed to subsist themselves for a considerable part of the year by fishing, or snaring the deer, without having recourse to fire-arms, yet, on

the present occasion, they felt little inclined to do so, and gave scope to their natural love of ease, as long as our store-house seemed to be well stocked. Nevertheless, as they were conscious of impairing our future resources, they did not fail, occasionally, to remind us that it was not their fault, to express an ardent desire to go hunting, and to request a supply of ammunition, although they knew that it was not in our power to give it.

The summer birds by this time had entirely deserted us, leaving, for our winter companions, the raven, cinereous crow, ptarmigan, and snow-bird. The last of the water-fowl that quitted us was a species of diver, of the same size with the *colymbus arcticus*, but differing from it in the arrangement of the white spots on its plumage, and in having a yellowish white bill. This bird was occasionally caught in our fishing nets.

The thermometer during the month of October, at Fort Enterprise, never rose above  $37^{\circ}$ , or fell below  $5^{\circ}$ ; the mean temperature for the month was  $23^{\circ}$ .

In the beginning of October a party had been sent to the westward to seach for birch to make snow-shoe frames, and the Indian women were afterwards employed in netting the shoes and preparing leather for winter-clothing to the men. Robes of rein-deer skin were also obtained from the Indians, and issued to the men who were to travel, as they are not only a great deal lighter than blankets, but also much warmer, and altogether better adapted for a winter in this climate. They are, however, unfit for summer use, as the least moisture causes the skin to spoil, and lose its hair. It requires the skins of seven deer to make one robe. The finest are made of the skins of young fawns.

The fishing, having failed as the weather became more severe, was given up on the 5th. It had procured us about one thousand two hundred *white fish*, from two to three pounds each. There are two other species of *Coregoni* in Winter Lake, *Back's grayling* and the *round fish*; and a few *trout*, *pike*, *methye*, and *red carp*, were also

occasionally obtained from the nets. It may be worthy of notice here, that the fish froze as they were taken out of the nets, in a short time became a solid mass of ice, and by a blow or two of the hatchet were easily split open, when the intestines might be removed in one lump. If in this completely frozen state they were thawed before the fire, they recovered their animation. This was particularly the case with the carp, and we had occasion to observe it repeatedly, as Dr. Richardson occupied himself in examining the structure of the different species of fish, and was, always in the winter, under the necessity of thawing them before he could cut them. We have seen a carp recover so far as to leap about with much vigour, after it had been frozen for thirty-six hours.

From the 12th to the 16th we had fine, and for the season, warm weather; and the deer, which had not been seen since the 26th of October, reappeared in the neighbourhood of the house, to the surprise of the Indians, who attributed their return to



the barren grounds to the unusual mildness of the season. On this occasion, by melting some of our pewter cups, we managed to furnish five balls to each of the hunters, but they were all expended unsuccessfully, except by Akaitcho, who killed two deer.

By the middle of the month Winter River was firmly frozen over, except the small rapid at its commencement, which remained open all the winter. The ice on the lake was now nearly two feet thick. After the 16th we had a succession of cold, snowy, and windy weather. We had become anxious to hear of the arrival of Mr. Back and his party at Fort Providence. The Indians, who had calculated the period at which a messenger ought to have returned from thence to be already passed, became impatient when it had elapsed, and, with their usual love of evil augury, tormented us by their melancholy forebodings. At one time they conjectured that the whole party had fallen through the ice; at another, that they had been way-laid and cut off by the Dog-ribs. In vain did we urge

the improbability of the former accident, or the peaceable character of the Dog-ribs, so little in conformity with the latter. “The ice at this season was deceitful,” they said, “and the Dog-ribs, though unwarlike, were treacherous.” These assertions, so often repeated, had some effect upon the spirits of our Canadian voyagers, who seldom weigh any opinion they adopt; but we persisted in treating their fears as chimerical, for had we seemed to listen to them for a moment, it is more than probable that the whole of our Indians would have gone to Fort Providence in search of supplies, and we should have found it extremely difficult to have recovered them.

The matter was put to rest by the appearance of Belanger on the morning of the 23d, and the Indians, now running into the opposite extreme, were disposed to give us more credit for our judgment than we deserved. They had had a tedious and fatiguing journey to Fort Providence, and for some days were destitute of provisions.

Belanger arrived alone; he had walked

constantly for the last six-and-thirty hours, leaving his Indian companions encamped at the last woods, they being unwilling to accompany him across the barren grounds during the storm that had prevailed for several days, and blew with unusual violence on the morning of his arrival. His locks were matted with snow, and he was incrustated with ice from head to foot, so that we scarcely recognised him when he burst in upon us. We welcomed him with the usual shake of the hand, but were unable to give him the glass of rum which every voyager receives on his arrival at a trading post.

As soon as his packet was thawed, we eagerly opened it to obtain our English letters. The latest were dated on the preceding April. They came by way of Canada, and were brought up in September to Slave Lake by the North-West Company's canoes.

We were not so fortunate with regard to our stores; of ten pieces, or bales of 90 lbs. weight, which had been sent from York

Factory by Governor Williams, five of the most essential had been left at the Grand Rapid on the Saskatchewan, owing, as far as we could judge from the accounts that reached us, to the misconduct of the officer to whom they were intrusted, and who was ordered to convey them to Cumberland House. Being overtaken by some of the North-West Company's canoes, he had insisted on their taking half of his charge, as it was intended for the service of government. The North-West gentlemen objected, that their canoes had already got a cargo in, and that they had been requested to convey our stores from Cumberland House only, where they had a canoe waiting for the purpose. The Hudson's Bay officer upon this deposited our ammunition and tobacco upon the beach, and departed, without any regard to the serious consequences that might result to us from the want of them. The Indians, who assembled at the opening of the packet, and sat in silence watching our countenances, were necessarily made acquainted with the non-

arrival of our stores, and bore the intelligence with unexpected tranquillity. We took care, however, in our communications with them, to dwell upon the more agreeable parts of our intelligence, and they seemed to receive particular pleasure on being informed of the arrival of two Esquimaux interpreters at Slave Lake, on their way to join the party. The circumstance not only quieted their fears of opposition from the Esquimaux on our descent to the sea next season, but also afforded a substantial proof of our influence in being able to bring two people of that nation from such a distance.

Akaitcho, who is a man of great penetration and shrewdness, duly appreciated these circumstances; indeed he has often surprised us by his correct judgment of the character of individuals amongst the traders or of our own party, although his knowledge of their opinion was, in most instances, obtained through the imperfect medium of interpretation. He was an attentive observer, however, of every action, and stea-



dily compared their conduct with their pretensions.

By the newspapers we learned the demise of our revered and lamented sovereign George III., and the proclamation of George IV. We concealed this intelligence from the Indians, lest the death of their Great Father might lead them to suppose that we should be unable to fulfil our promises to them.

The Indians who had left Fort Providence with Belanger arrived the day after him, and, amongst other intelligence, informed Akaitcho of some reports they had heard to our disadvantage. They stated that Mr. Weeks, the gentleman in charge of Fort Providence, had told them, that so far from our being what we represented ourselves to be, the officers of a great King, we were merely a set of dependant wretches, whose only aim was to obtain subsistence for a season in the plentiful country of the Copper Indians; that out of charity we had been supplied with a portion of goods by the trading Companies, but that there was

not the smallest probability of our being able to reward the Indians when their term of service was completed. Akaitcho, with great good sense, instantly came to have the matter explained, stating, at the same time, that he could not credit it. I then pointed out to him that Mr. Wentzel, with whom they had long been accustomed to trade, had pledged the credit of his Company for the stipulated rewards to the party that accompanied us, and that the trading debts due by Akaitcho and his party had already been remitted, which was of itself a sufficient proof of our influence with the North-West Company. I also reminded Akaitcho, that our having caused the Esquimaux to be brought up at a great expense, was evidence of our future intentions, and informed him that I should write to Mr. Smith, the senior trader in the department on the subject, when I had no doubt that a satisfactory explanation would be given. The Indians retired from the conference apparently satisfied, but this business was in the end productive of much inconvenience to us,

and proved very detrimental to the progress of the Expedition. In conjunction also with other intelligence conveyed in Mr. Back's letters, respecting the disposition of the traders towards us, particularly a statement of Mr. Weeks, that he had been desired not to assist us with supplies from his post, it was productive of much present uneasiness to me.

On the 28th St. Germain, the interpreter, set out with eight Canadian voyagers and four Indian hunters to bring up our stores from Fort Providence. I wrote by him to Mr. Smith, at Moose Deer Island, and Mr. Keith, at Chipewyan, both of the North-West Company, urging them in the strongest manner to comply with the requisition for stores, which Mr. Back would present. I also informed Mr. Simpson, principal agent in the Athabasca for the Hudson's Bay Company, who had proffered every assistance in his power, that we should gladly avail ourselves of the kind intentions expressed in a letter which I had received from him.

We also sent a number of broken axes to Slave Lake to be repaired. The dog that came to us on the 22d of October, and had become very familiar, followed the party. We were in hopes that it might prove of some use in dragging their loads, but we afterwards learned that on the evening after their departure from the house, they had the cruelty to kill and eat it, although they had no reason to apprehend a scarcity of provision. A dog is considered to be delicate eating by the voyagers.

The mean temperature of the air for November was  $-0^{\circ}.7$ . The greatest heat observed was  $25^{\circ}$  above, and the least  $31^{\circ}$  below, zero.

On the 1st of December the sky was clear, a slight appearance of stratus only being visible near the horizon; but a kind of snow fell at intervals in the forenoon, its particles so minute as to be observed only in the sunshine. Towards noon the snow became more apparent, and the two limbs of a prismatic arch were visible, one on each side of the sun near its place in the heavens,

the centre being deficient. We have frequently observed this descent of minute icy spiculæ when the sky appears perfectly clear, and could even perceive that its silent but continued action, added to the snowy covering of the ground.

Having received one hundred balls from Fort Providence by Belanger, we distributed them amongst the Indians, informing the leader at the same time, that the residence of so large a party as his at the house, amounting, with women and children, to forty souls, was producing a serious reduction in our stock of provision. He acknowledged the justice of the statement, and promised to remove as soon as his party had prepared snow-shoes and sledges for themselves. Under one pretext or other, however, their departure was delayed until the 10th of the month, when they left us, having previously received one of our fishing nets, and all the ammunition we possessed. The leader left his aged mother and two female attendants to our care, requesting that if she died during his absence



she might be buried at a distance from the fort, that he might not be reminded of his loss when he visited us.

Keskarrah, the guide, also remained behind, with his wife and daughter. The old man has become too feeble to hunt, and his time is almost entirely occupied in attendance upon his wife, who has been long afflicted with an ulcer on the face, which has nearly destroyed her nose.

Lately he made an offering to the water spirits, whose wrath he apprehended to be the cause of her malady. It consisted of a knife, a piece of tobacco, and some other trifling articles, which were tied up in a small bundle and committed to the rapid with a long prayer. He does not trust entirely, however, to the relenting of the spirits for his wife's cure, but comes daily to Dr. Richardson for medicine.

Upon one occasion he received the medicine from the doctor with such formality, and wrapped it up in his rein-deer robe with such extraordinary carefulness, that it excited the involuntary laughter of Mr.

Hood and myself. The old man smiled in his turn, and as he always seemed proud of the familiar way in which we were accustomed to joke with him, we thought no more upon the subject. But he unfortunately mentioned the circumstance to his wife, who imagined in consequence that the drug was not productive of its usual good effects, and they immediately came to the conclusion that some bad medicine had been intentionally given to them. The distress produced by this idea, was in proportion to their former faith in the potency of the remedy, and the night was spent in singing and groaning. Next morning the whole family were crying in concert, and it was not until the evening of the second day that we succeeded in pacifying them. The old woman began to feel better, and her faith in the medicine was renewed.

While speaking of this family, I may remark that the daughter, whom we designated Green-stockings from her dress, is considered by her tribe to be a great beauty. Mr. Hood drew an accurate portrait of her,





although her mother was averse to her sitting for it. She was afraid, she said, that her daughter's likeness would induce the Great Chief who resided in England to send for the original. The young lady, however, was undeterred by any such fear. She has already been an object of contest between her countrymen, and although under sixteen years of age, has belonged successively to two husbands, and would probably have been the wife of many more, if her mother had not required her services as a nurse.

The weather during this month was the coldest we experienced during our residence in America. The thermometer sunk on one occasion to  $57^{\circ}$  below zero, and never rose beyond  $6^{\circ}$  above it; the mean for the month was  $-29^{\circ}.7$ . During these intense colds, however, the atmosphere was generally calm, and the wood-cutters and others went about their ordinary occupations without using any extraordinary precautions, yet without feeling any bad effects. They had their rein-deer shirts on, leathern mittens



lined with blankets, and furred caps; but none of them used any defence for the face, or needed any. Indeed we have already mentioned that the heat is abstracted most rapidly from the body during strong breezes, and most of those who have perished from cold in this country, have fallen a sacrifice to their being overtaken on a lake or other unsheltered place, by a storm of wind. The intense colds were, however, detrimental to us in another way. The trees froze to their very centres and became as hard as stones, and more difficult to cut. Some of the axes were broken daily, and by the end of the month we had only one left that was fit for felling trees. By entrusting it only to one of the party who had been bred a carpenter, and who could use it with dexterity, it was fortunately preserved until the arrival of our men with others from Fort Providence.

A thermometer, hung in our bed-room at the distance of sixteen feet from the fire, but exposed to its direct radiation, stood even in the day time occasionally at  $15^{\circ}$

below zero, and was observed more than once, previous to the kindling of the fire in the morning, to be as low as  $40^{\circ}$  below zero. On two of these occasions the chronometers 2149 and 2151, which during the night lay under Mr. Hood's and Dr. Richardson's pillows, stopped while they were dressing themselves.

The rapid at the commencement of the river remained open in the severest weather, although it was somewhat contracted in width. Its temperature was  $32^{\circ}$ , as was the surface of the river opposite the house, about a quarter of a mile lower down, tried at a hole in the ice, through which water was drawn for domestic purposes. The river here was two fathoms and a half deep, and the temperature at its bottom was at least  $42^{\circ}$  above zero. This fact was ascertained by a spirit thermometer; in which, probably from some irregularity in the tube, a small portion of the coloured liquor usually remained at  $42^{\circ}$  when the column was made to descend rapidly. In the present instance the thermometer standing at

47° below zero, with no portion of the fluid in the upper part of the tube, was let down slowly into the water, but drawn cautiously and rapidly up again, when a red drop at + 42° indicated that the fluid had risen to that point or above it. At this period the daily visits of the sun were very short, and owing to the obliquity of his rays, afforded us little warmth or light. It is half-past eleven before he peeps over a small ridge of hills opposite to the house, and he sinks into the horizon at half-past two. On the 28th Mr. Hood, in order to attain an approximation to the quantity of terrestrial refraction, observed the sun's meridian altitude when the thermometer stood at 46° below zero, at the imminent hazard of having his fingers frozen.

He found the sextant had changed its error considerably, and that the glasses had lost their parallelism from the contraction of the brass. In measuring the error he perceived that the diameter of the sun's image was considerably short of twice the semi-diameter; a proof of the uncertainty

of celestial observations made during these intense frosts. The results of this and another similar observation are given at the bottom of the page.\*

\* “ The observed meridian altitude of ☉ upper limb was  $2^{\circ} 52' 51''$ . Temperature of the air  $-45^{\circ} 5'$ . By comparing this altitude, corrected by the mean refraction and parallax, with that deduced from the latitude which was observed in autumn, the increase of refraction is found to be  $6' 50''$ , the whole refraction, therefore, for the altitude  $2^{\circ} 52' 51''$  is  $21' 49''$ . Admitting that the refraction increases in the same ratio as that of the atmosphere at a mean state of temperature, the horizontal refraction will be  $47' 22''$ . But the diameter of the sun, measured immediately after the observation, was only  $27' 7''$ , which shows an increase of refraction at the lower limb of  $3' 29''$ . The horizontal refraction calculated with this difference, and the above-mentioned ratio, is  $56' 3''$ , at the temperature  $-45^{\circ} 5'$ . So that in the parallel  $68^{\circ} 42'$ , where, if there was no refraction, the sun would be invisible for thirty-four days, his upper limb, with the refraction  $56' 3''$ , is, in fact, above the horizon at every noon.

“ The wind was from the westward a moderate breeze, and the air perfectly clear. January 1st, 1821. Observed the meridian altitude of ☉ lower limb  $2^{\circ} 35' 20''$ . ☉ apparent diameter  $29^{\circ} 20'$ . For ap-

The aurora appeared with more or less brilliancy on twenty eight nights in this

parent altitude  $2^{\circ} 35' 20''$ , the mean refraction is  $16' 5''$  (Mackay's Tables), and the true, found as detailed above, is  $20' 8''$ : which increasing in the same ratio as that of the atmosphere, at a mean state of temperature, is  $41' 19''$  at the horizon. But the difference of refraction at the upper and lower limbs, increasing also in that ratio, gives  $55' 16''$  for the horizontal refraction. Temperature of the air  $-41^{\circ}$ . Wind north, a light breeze, a large halo visible about the sun. January 15th, 1821.—Observed an apparent meridian altitude  $\odot$  lower limb  $4^{\circ} 24' 57''$ .  $\odot$  apparent diameter  $31' 5''$ . For apparent altitude  $4^{\circ} 24' 57''$ , the mean refraction is  $10' 58''$  (Mackay's Tables), and the true, found as detailed above, is  $14' 39''$ , which, increasing in the same ratio as that of the atmosphere at a mean state of temperature, is  $43' 57''$  at the horizon. But the difference of refraction between the upper and lower limbs, increasing also in that ratio, gives  $48' 30''$  for the horizontal refraction.

“ Temperature of the air  $-35^{\circ}$ , a light air from the westward, very clear.

“ The extreme coldness of the weather rendered these operations difficult and dangerous; yet I think the observations may be depended upon within  $30''$ , as will appear by their approximate results in calculating



month, and we were also gratified by the resplendent beauty of the moon, which for many days together performed its circle round the heavens, shining with undiminished lustre, and scarcely disappearing below the horizon during the twenty-four hours.

During many nights there was a halo round the moon, although the stars shone brightly, and the atmosphere appeared otherwise clear. The same phenomenon was observed round the candles, even in our bed-rooms; the diameter of the halo increasing as the observer receded from the light. These halos, both round the moon and candles, occasionally exhibited faintly some of the prismatic colours.

As it may be interesting to the reader to know how we passed our time at this season of the year, I shall mention briefly, that a considerable portion of it was occupied in the horizontal refraction; for it must be considered that an error of 30'', in the refraction in altitude, would make a difference of several minutes in the horizontal refraction."—MR. HOOD'S *Journal*.

writing up our journals. Some newspapers and magazines, that we had received from England with our letters, were read again and again, and commented upon, at our meals; and we often exercised ourselves with conjecturing the changes that might take place in the world before we could hear from it again. The probability of our receiving letters, and the period of their arrival, were calculated to a nicety. We occasionally paid the woodmen a visit, or took a walk for a mile or two on the river.

In the evenings we joined the men in the hall, and took a part in their games, which generally continued till a late hour; in short, we never found the time to hang heavy upon our hands; and the peculiar occupations of each of the officers afforded them more employment than might at first be supposed. I re-calculated the observations made on our route; Mr. Hood protracted the charts, and made those drawings of birds, plants, and fishes, which cannot appear in this work, but which have been the admiration of every one who has

seen them. Each of the party sedulously and separately recorded their observations on the aurora; and Dr. Richardson contrived to obtain, from under the snow, specimens of most of the lichens in the neighbourhood, and to make himself acquainted with the mineralogy of the surrounding country.

The Sabbath was always a day of rest with us; the woodmen were required to provide for the exigencies of that day on Saturday, and the party were dressed in their best attire. Divine service was regularly performed, and the Canadians attended, and behaved with great decorum, although they were all Roman Catholics, and but little acquainted with the language in which the prayers were read. I regretted much that we had not a French Prayer-Book, but the Lord's Prayer and Creed were always read to them in their own language.

Our diet consisted almost entirely of rein-deer meat, varied twice a week by fish, and occasionally by a little flour, but we had no vegetables of any description. On

the Sunday mornings we drank a cup of chocolate, but our greatest luxury was tea (without sugar), of which we regularly partook twice a-day. With rein-deer's fat, and strips of cotton shirts, we formed candles; and Hepburn acquired considerable skill in the manufacture of soap, from the wood-ashes, fat and salt. The formation of soap was considered as rather a mysterious operation by our Canadians, and, in their hands, was always supposed to fail if a woman approached the kettle in which the ley was boiling. Such are our simple domestic details.

On the 30th, two hunters came from the leader, to convey ammunition to him, as soon as our men should bring it from Fort Providence.

The men, at this time, coated the walls of the house on the outside, with a thin mixture of clay and water, which formed a crust of ice, that, for some days, proved impervious to the air; the dryness of the atmosphere, however, was such, that the ice in a short time evaporated, and gave

admission to the wind as before. It is a general custom at the forts to give this sort of coating to the walls at Christmas time. When it was gone, we attempted to remedy its defect, by heaping up snow against the walls.

*January 1, 1821.*—This morning our men assembled, and greeted us with the customary salutation on the commencement of the new year. That they might enjoy a holyday, they had yesterday collected double the usual quantity of fire-wood, and we anxiously expected the return of the men from Fort Providence, with some additions to their comforts. We had stronger hope of their arrival before the evening, as we knew that every voyager uses his utmost endeavour to reach a post upon, or previous to, the *jour de l'an*, that he may partake of the wonted festivities. It forms, as Christmas is said to have done among our forefathers, the theme of their conversation for months before and after the period of its arrival. On the present occasion we could only treat them with a little flour



and fat; these were both considered as great luxuries, but still the feast was defective from the want of rum, although we promised them a little when it should arrive.

The early part of January proved mild, the thermometer rose to  $20^{\circ}$  above zero, and we were surprised by the appearance of a kind of damp fog, approaching very nearly to rain. The Indians expressed their astonishment at this circumstance, and declared the present to be one of the warmest winters they had ever experienced. Some of them reported that it had actually rained in the woody parts of the country. In the latter part of the month, however, the thermometer again descended to  $-49^{\circ}$ , and the mean temperature for the month proved to be  $-15^{\circ}.6$ . Owing to the fogs that obscured the sky, the aurora was visible only upon eighteen nights in the month.

On the 15th seven of our men arrived from Fort Providence with two kegs of rum, one barrel of powder, sixty pounds of ball, two rolls of tobacco, and some cloth-

ing. They had been twenty-one days on their march from Slave Lake, and the labour they underwent was sufficiently evinced by their sledge-collars having worn out the shoulders of their coats. Their loads weighed from sixty to ninety pounds each, exclusive of their bedding and provisions, which at starting must have been at least as much more. We were much rejoiced at their arrival, and proceeded forthwith to pierce the spirit cask, and issue to each of the household the portion of rum which had been promised on the first day of the year. The spirits, which were proof, were frozen, but after standing at the fire for some time they flowed out of the consistency of honey. The temperature of the liquid, even in this state, was so low as instantly to convert into ice the moisture which condensed on the surface of the dram-glass. The fingers also adhered to the glass, and would doubtless have been speedily frozen had they been kept in contact with it; yet each of the voyagers swallowed his dram without ex-

periencing the slightest inconvenience, or complaining of tooth-ache.

After the men had retired, an Indian, who had accompanied them from Fort Providence, informed me that they had broached the cask on their way up and spent two days in drinking. This instance of breach of trust was excessively distressing to me ; I felt for their privations and fatigues, and was disposed to seize every opportunity of alleviating them, but this, combined with many instances of petty dishonesty with regard to meat, showed how little confidence could be put in a Canadian voyager when food or spirits were in question. We had been indeed made acquainted with their character on these points by the traders ; but we thought that when they saw their officers living under equal if not greater privations than themselves, they would have been prompted by some degree of generous feeling to abstain from those depredations which, under ordinary circumstances, they would scarcely have blushed to be detected in.

As they were pretty well aware that such a circumstance could not long be concealed from us, one of them came the next morning with an artful apology for their conduct. He stated, that as they knew it was my intention to treat them with a dram on the commencement of the new year, they had helped themselves to a small quantity on that day, trusting to my goodness for forgiveness; and being unwilling to act harshly at this period, I did forgive them, after admonishing them to be very circumspect in their future conduct.

The ammunition, and a small present of rum, were sent to Akaitcho.

On the 18th, Vaillant, the woodman, had the misfortune to break his axe. This would have been a serious evil a few weeks sooner, but we had just received some others from Slave Lake.

On the 27th, Mr. Wentzel and St. Germain arrived with the two Esquimaux, Tattannœuck and Hœootœerock (the belly and the ear). The English names, which were bestowed upon them at Fort Churchill

in commemoration of the months of their arrival there, are Augustus and Junius. The former speaks English.

We now learned that Mr. Back proceeded with Beuparlant to Fort Chipewyan, on the 24th of December, to procure stores, having previously discharged J. Belleau from our service at his own request, and according to my directions. I was the more induced to comply with this man's desire of leaving us, as he proved to be too weak to perform the duty of bowman, which he had undertaken.

Four dogs were brought up by this party, and proved a great relief to our wood-haulers during the remainder of the season.

By the arrival of Mr. Wentzel, who is an excellent musician, and assisted us (*con amore*) in our attempts to amuse the men, we were enabled to gratify the whole establishment with an occasional dance. Of this amusement the voyagers were very fond, and not the less so, as it was now and then accompanied by a dram as long as our rum lasted.



On the 5th of February two Canadians came from Akaitcho for fresh supplies of ammunition. We were mortified to learn that he had received some further unpleasant reports concerning us from Fort Providence, and that his faith in our good intentions was somewhat shaken. He expressed himself dissatisfied with the quantity of ammunition we had sent him, accused us of an intention of endeavouring to degrade him in the eyes of his tribe, and informed us that Mr. Weeks had refused to pay some notes for trifling quantities of goods and ammunition that had been given to the hunters who accompanied our men to Slave Lake.

Some powder and shot, and a keg of diluted spirits were sent to him, with the strongest assurances of our regard.

On the 12th another party of six men was sent to Fort Providence, to bring up the remaining stores. St. Germain went to Akaitcho for the purpose of sending two of his hunters to join this party on its route.

On comparing the language of our two

Esquimaux with a copy of St. John's Gospel, printed for the use of the Moravian Missionary Settlements on the Labrador coast, it appeared that the Esquimaux who resort to Churchill speak a language essentially the same with those who frequent the Labrador coast. The Red Knives too recognise the expression *Teyma*, used by the Esquimaux when they accost strangers in a friendly manner, as similarly pronounced by Augustus, and those of his race who frequent the mouth of the Copper-Mine River.

The tribe to which Augustus belongs resides generally a little to the northward of Churchill. In the spring, before the ice quits the shores, they kill seal, but during winter they frequent the borders of the large lakes near the coast, where they obtain fish, rein-deer, and musk-oxen.

There are eighty-four grown men in the tribe, only seven of whom are aged. Six chiefs have each two wives ; the rest of the men have only one, so that the number of married people may amount to one hundred

and seventy. He could give me no certain data whereby I might estimate the number of children.

Two great chiefs, or *Ackhaiyoot*, have complete authority in directing the movements of the party, and in distributing provisions. The *Attoogannœuck*, or lesser chiefs, are respected principally as senior men. The tribe seldom suffers from want of food, if the chief moves to the different stations at the proper season. They seem to follow the eastern custom respecting marriage. As soon as a girl is born, the young lad who wishes to have her for a wife goes to her father's tent, and proffers himself. If accepted, a promise is given which is considered binding, and the girl is delivered to her betrothed husband at the proper age.

They consider their progenitors to have come from the moon. Augustus has no other idea of a Deity than some confused notions which he has obtained at Churchill.

When any of the tribe are dangerously ill, a conjurer is sent for, and the bearer of

the message carries a suitable present to induce his attendance. Upon his arrival he encloses himself in the tent with the sick man, and sings over him for days together without tasting food; but Augustus, as well as the rest of the uninitiated, are ignorant of the purport of his songs, and of the nature of the Being to whom they are addressed. The conjurers practise a good deal of jugglery in swallowing knives, firing bullets through their bodies, &c. but they are at these times generally secluded from view, and the bystanders believe their assertions, without requiring to be eye-witnesses of the fact. Sixteen men and three women amongst Augustus's tribe are acquainted with the mysteries of the art. The skill of the latter is exerted only on their own sex.

Upon the map being spread before Augustus, he soon comprehended it, and recognized Chesterfield Inlet to be "the opening into which salt waters enter at spring tides, and which receives a river at its upper end." He termed it *Kannœuck*

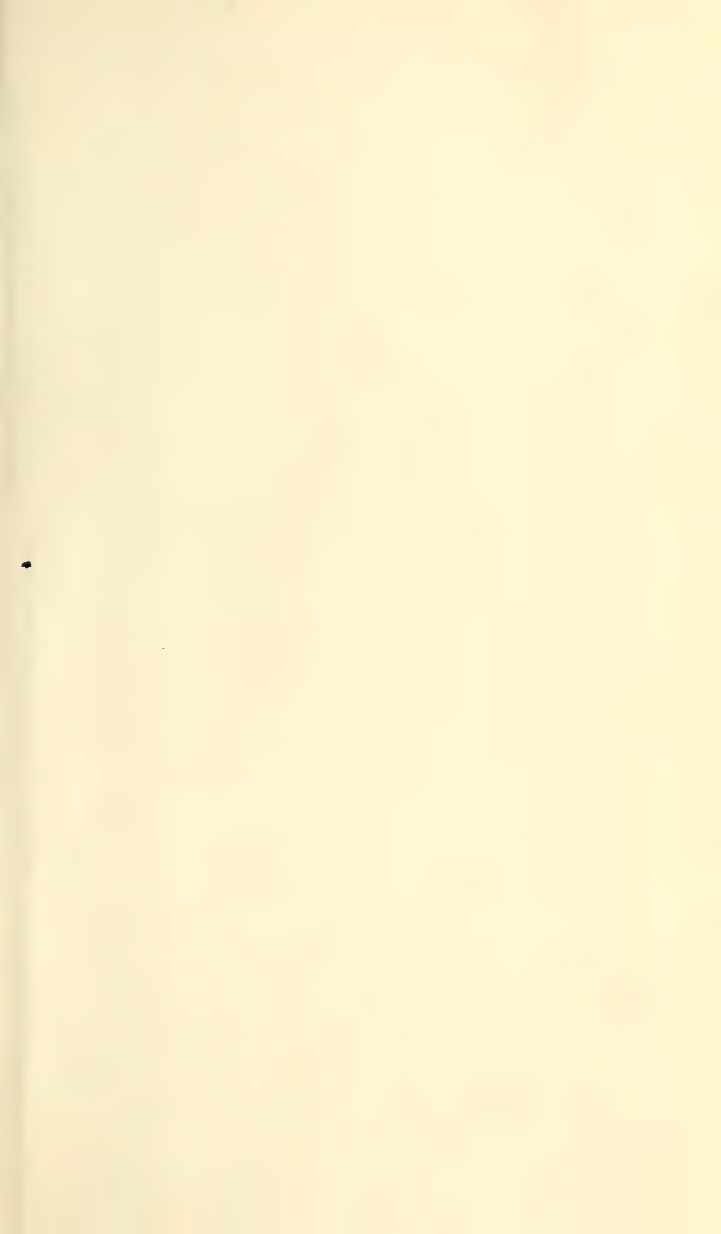
*Kleenœuck*. He has never been farther north himself than Marble Island, which he distinguishes as being the spot where the large ships were wrecked, alluding to the disastrous termination of Barlow and Knight's Voyage of Discovery.\* He says, however, that Esquimaux of three different tribes have traded with his countrymen, and that they described themselves as having come across land from a northern sea. One tribe, who named themselves *Ahwhacknan-helett*, he supposes may come from Repulse Bay; another, designated *Ootkooseek-kaling-mæoot*, or Stone-Kettle Esquimaux, reside more to the westward; and the third, the *Kang-orr-mæoot*, or White-Goose Esquimaux, describe themselves as coming from a great distance, and mentioned that a party of Indians had killed several of their tribe on the summer preceding their visit. Upon comparing the dates of this murder with that of the last massacre which the Copper Indians have perpetrated on these harmless and defenceless people, they appear to differ

\* See Introduction to HEARNE's *Journey*, p. xxiv.



two years ; but the lapse of time is so inaccurately recorded, that this difference in their accounts is not sufficient to destroy their identity ; besides the Chipewyans, the only other Indians who could possibly have committed the deed have long since ceased to go to war. If this massacre should be the one mentioned by the Copper Indians, the Kang-orr-mœoot must reside near the mouth of the Anatesy, or River of Strangers.

END OF VOL. II.

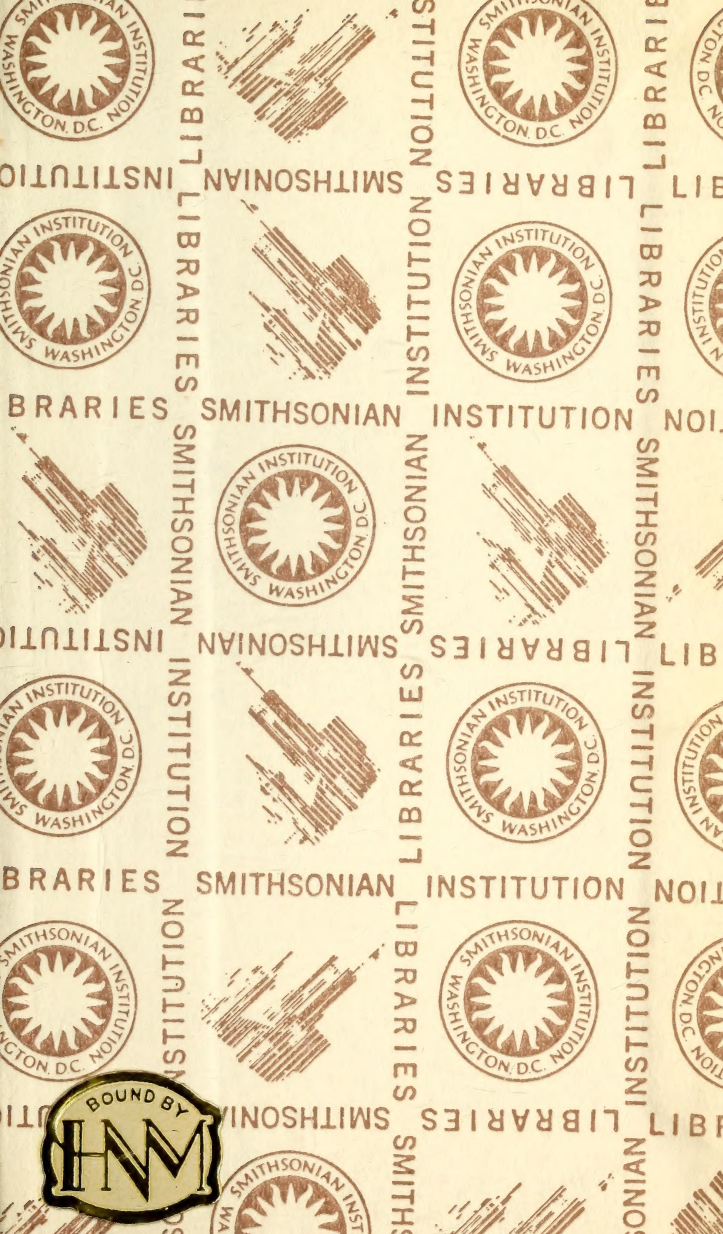












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